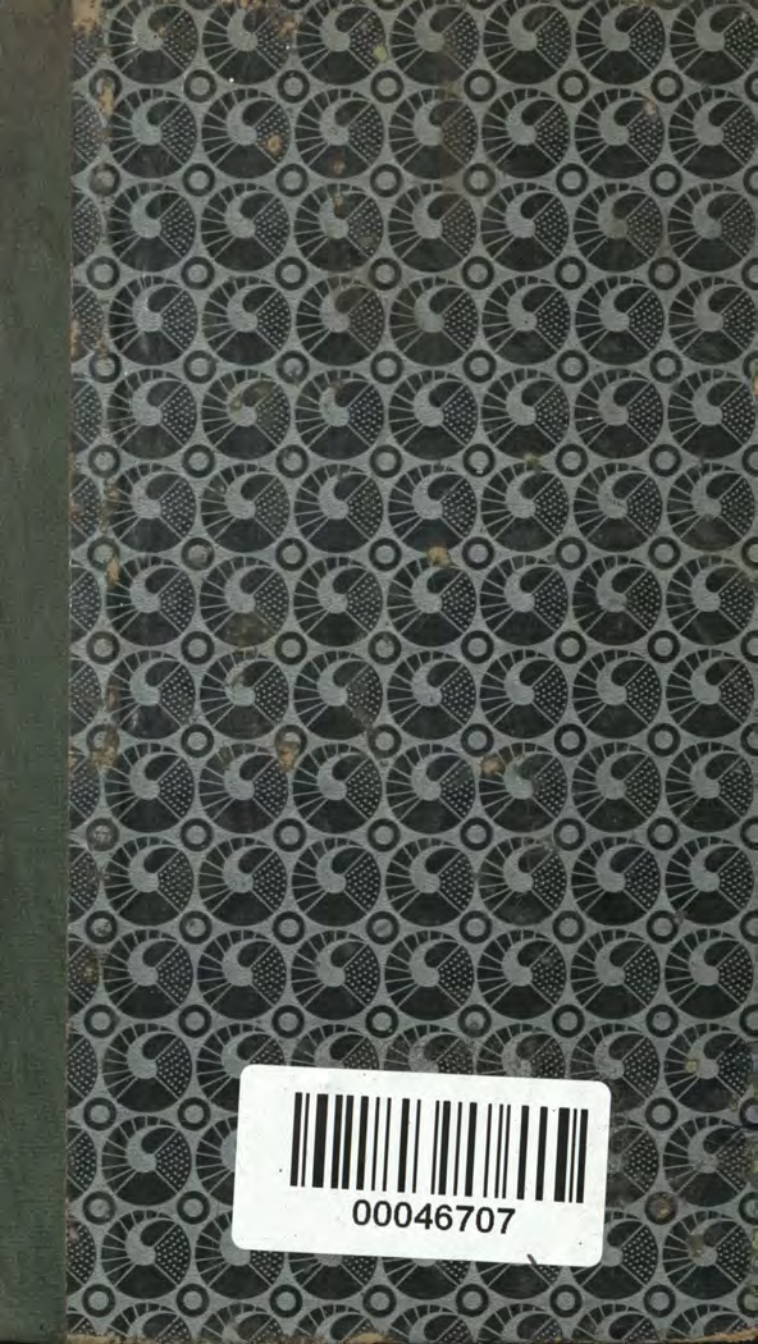
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UNDER THE

ESPECIAL PATRONAGE

OF

HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY,

THE QUEEN.

SACRED POETRY

OF THE

SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:

INCLUDING THE WHOLE OF

GILES FLETCHER'S

CHRIST'S VICTORY AND TRIUMPH;

WITH COPIOUS SELECTIONS FROM

SPENSER	P. FLETCHER	QUARLES
DAVIES	WITHER	HERBERT
SANDYS	BISHOP KING	MILTON

VOL. I.

WITH AN

INTRODUCTORY ESSAY AND CRITICAL REMARKS,

BY

THE REV. R. CATTERMOLE, B. D.

LONDON:

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MDCCCXXXV.

INSTITUTION BOMBAY

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LIBRA OF THE BOMBA BRANC OF THE ROYAL ASIATIC

his social position, is a worldly unimaginative being. What is denoted in those brawling clamours for extended civil rights, which stun us on all sides, —in those restless suspicions of existing authority, which agitate the popular mind,—in the zealous attempts going on to cast into the crucible, and try by the vulgarest tests, those majestic but indefinable ideas, those venerable principles, which have hitherto benignantly awed mankind into a happy contentedness—to be minted into the petty coinage of legislative enactments—unless a growing disposition to overvalue the world of sense, and 'the things that are in the world?' Carried to its present extreme, this tendency of the time runs counter, not only to religion—whose office is to withdraw mankind from the visible and present to the unseen and the eternal; but to all those thoughts, feelings, and pursuits, which are the best allies of religion, by teaching the soul to expand itself amid the grandeur of its own conceptions, the melancholy dignity of the past, and the sublime promises of the future.

There is yet another circumstance which has largely concurred to diffuse ignorance and prejudice, on this subject, especially among good, but weak and unreflecting persons. None have been greater enemies to the just influence of poetry, than poets themselves. "Those rarely bestowed gifts," by which they are distinguished, they have unhap-

pily, and, in proportion, by no means ra[illegible]n-
ployed to inflame the bad passions, and [illegible]ot
the hearts, of their fellow-men. Perhaps [illegible]l,
less harm has eventually followed this p[illegible]n
of ability, than is commonly supposed. [illegible],
we should be among the last to become t[illegible]
gists of licentiousness, or to extenuate the [illegible]
for such we deem it—of mingling the le[illegible]
sion of poison with those refreshing wa[illegible]
true sources of which it will be seen tha[illegible]
gard as situated far above the region of th[illegible]
Helicon. But we think such to be essent[illegible]
nature of genuine poetry, that, unless i[illegible]
few possible cases, where a fixed purpose [illegible]
verting it to an engine of evil may have ex[illegible]
a design barely consistent with the posse[illegible]
the faculty,—its influence has invariably [illegible]
derated on the side of truth and virtu[illegible]
mere use of numbers has a softening and [illegible]
izing effect; and it may be doubted whe[illegible]
agitation of the soul by the inward stirrin[illegible]
affections, independent of the expression [illegible]
definite sentiment favourable to virtue, [illegible]
purify the moral atmosphere within, and [illegible]
indirectly promote the same end. To purs[illegible]
question, however, is not the present p[illegible]
Many good men think otherwise. Justly of[illegible]
with effusions inspired by intemperate passio[illegible]
false sensibility—witnessing the extensive c[illegible]

tion, among all classes, of works in verse, avowedly hostile to religious and moral principle—they have, not unnaturally, acquired a prejudice against the fascinating vehicle of so much mischief. It is the fate of the best gifts of heaven to be subject, through the perversity of mankind, to the worst abuses. Yet, it would be adopting a very foolish and unphilosophical course, wholly to scorn or repudiate them on that account. The proper use of those gifts will ever prove the most effective antidote to their abuse. This is clearly shown in the obvious fact, that poems which are calculated to corrupt the mind by their licentiousness, and debase it by their folly, notwithstanding they may find readers in the age which produces them, among those whose vices they seek to adorn, and whose follies they would flatter, disappear in the succeeding generation, which has no such interest in them, and leave the field open to productions of a different character. Whatever is essentially evil or worthless, cannot maintain a permanent place in the general esteem of mankind. Those poets whose names are familiar to every one as "household words," have been, upon the whole, teachers of virtue—many of them highly distinguished as such. Homer, Pindar, Æschylus, Dante, Spenser, Shakspeare, Milton,—such are the names which every succeeding age has cherished, and had in honour. What, in the meantime, is become of

the many fulsome laureats of the madness and folly of their times, "with their prodigious issues of tumerous heats and flashes of their adulterate brains," who successively found listeners in the long interval between the first and last of these illustrious men? They have been silently left to merited oblivion; the most brilliant of them surviving only in the partial admiration of a few studious and retired minds, who have sufficient leisure and taste to separate the gold from the alloy. The true poet, however, will survive in the hearts of the people,—not at all times in equal estimation, but always in a degree somewhat proportioned to his worth; for he is a master in the school of truth, and therefore of virtue; and the generations of *mankind* form too just an estimate of their own interests, not to value his lessons, however numerous may be the individual *men*, in each generation, who disregard them.

The end of the poet's labours, then, often as the assertion has been made, and by high critical authorities too, is not merely to impart delight. To gifts so rare and excellent a nobler office is assigned by the Creator. His method differs from that of the historian, the philosopher, and the divine; but, if true to his high calling, he is no less a teacher than they. He does not lead the mind right on, towards the temple of Wisdom, along a rough and thorny, or at least an unadorned road; but, with

equal certainty, he conducts it to the end of its researches, by many winding paths, among recesses of shadowy, mysterious beauty, and through prospects of ravishing splendour. Pursuing truth, not so much by fixing a steady eye upon its centre, as by yielding himself up without reserve to the guidance of that enlightened sensibility, which, in connection with and exalted by imagination, constitutes genius, he instructs by first moving and humanizing; he informs, by enlarging the conceptions and ennobling the fancy; he improves the character, by deepening and extending the emotions of the heart. By that instinctive insight which is a constituent of genius, he knows—and he avails himself of his knowledge—the thousand fine links and hidden associations which connect the mind with the outer world, through the senses; man with his kind, by the varied sympathies of our common nature; feeling with thought; and thought, in turn, with action and conduct. He employs sensible imagery, but with a design to raise the soul above the slavery of sense: he rouses the passions, yet not so as to render them the masters and tyrants of the will, but its ready ministers.

"Whatsoever in religion is holy and sublime, in virtue amiable or grave; whatsoever hath passion or admiration, in all the changes of that which is called fortune from without, or the wiles, subtleties, and refluxes of man's thoughts from within;

. . .

all these to paint and describe, teaching over the whole book of sanctity and virtue:"[1]—such, in the opinion of one whose qualifications to decide the question will not be disputed, is the task assigned to the creative energies of the poet, even in these periods of advanced civilization, when the severing of the two professions of divinity and law from the learned class has reduced the practical importance, or at least, the dignity of literature in general; and since the use of prose, in the treatment of didactic and unimpassioned subjects, has apparently further straitened the domain of the muses. In early times, however, the bard held an undisputed sway over every region of thought and feeling: "poets were divines, and exercised a kind of spiritual authority among the people. Verse was in those days the sacred style, the style of oracles and laws. The vows and thanks of the people were recommended to their gods in songs and hymns." A late profoundly philosophical writer does not hesitate to represent Orpheus, Linus, Musæus, and the other mythic poets of Greece, as the representatives, however partially and imperfectly they supported that character, of the Hebrew prophets and inspired lyrists. Consequently, though neither supernaturally endowed, nor divinely commissioned, he regards them as

[1] Milton.

filling an important place in the providential economy of the times in which they lived, and to the exigencies of which their endowments were adapted. "That we include these," he says, "under a distinct providential, though not miraculous dispensation, will surprise no one, who reflects that, in whatever has a permanent operation on the destinies and intellectual condition of mankind at large—that in all which has been manifestly employed as a co-agent in the mightiest revolution of the moral world, the propagation of the gospel; and in the intellectual progress of mankind, the restoration of philosophy, science, and the ingenuous arts—it were irreligion not to acknowledge the hand of divine Providence."[1] Poetry is the native birth of the human soul; but she was adopted by religion from the cradle, and passed her unpolluted youth in the hallowed service of the temple. The early Greek tragedy bears manifest evidences of its origin; and is so purely religious, according to the defective notions of religion held by its inventors, that it must have been of essential service in the public instruction of the people, in times when nothing answerable to the lessons of the pulpit were known. Both philosophy and poetry were gradually divested of their exclusively

[1] Coleridge.—Friend, vol. iii. page 231, (Edit. 1818.)

religious character; but not till the happy period approached, when all such imperfect discipline was rendered needless; when not only Paganism, but Judaism itself "paled its ineffectual fire" before the dawning light of the Gospel.

But, more strikingly still, and more irrefragably, to the Christian mind, are the high origin and sacred destination of poesy evinced, by the frequent employment of this form of composition in the inspired volume. Our great religious poet, with, we may be sure, no irreverent carelessness, regarding the use of solemn terms, has styled the endowments of the poet "the inspired gift of God;" and although the supernatural afflatus which enabled the prophets to reveal, in their exalted style, the secret counsels of God, was undoubtedly different in kind as well as degree, from the loftiest and most far-sighted poetical genius,—yet the employment of numbers, in communicating the most affecting of the divine messages to mankind, on the one hand, and, on the other, in those heaven-born aspirations of holy men towards God, which also contain their own evidence of an impulse from above, would seem to imply an *analogy* between the gifts of the prophet and the poet. We feel, in reading the songs of Moses, the Psalms of David, and the magnificent prophetic lyrics of Isaiah, that those extraordinary men would still have been poets of a high

order, had they not been among the prophets. We feel also that their fitness for the latter character was promoted by their possession of the former. The sober inference would appear to be, that between immediate inspiration and poetic susceptibility and energy, when worthily directed, there is some cognateness—some proportion—like that, for example, between human and divine love; that not in vain, in remote periods,

> ———"the hallowed name
> Of poet and of prophet were the same."

Be this as it may, thus much is certain—that the use of rhythm and poetic imagery, in the loftiest passages of the Bible, imparts a sacredness to verse, in the estimation of the pious; and supplies an argument, in addition to all others, against the desecration or misapplication of the highest of the Creator's intellectual gifts, which men of genius would do well seriously to ponder.

Christianity, which progressively admitted into her service all the liberal arts, made poetry peculiarly her own, from an early period. To have rejected it, indeed, would have been to place a painful and unnatural restraint upon the powers and tendencies of the human mind. Songs of praise and adoration are the form which the irrepressible utterances of a heart overflowing with a sense of the goodness and the majesty of God will insensi-

bly assume: penitential and precatory hymns offer a no less easy and natural medium of expression for the deep sorrows of the contrite, and the affectionate yearnings of the sad and forsaken soul. Nor was the highest authority wanting for the use of such lyric effusions, whether in the assemblies of the faithful, or in the solitary exercises of devotion. Our blessed Lord himself sanctioned the custom, by singing the usual hymn of the Jews, in celebrating the Passover. It was continued and extended by the apostles; who earnestly enjoined the practice upon their converts. At a very early period, the use of music and verse in their religious meetings attracted the notice of the heathen, as particularly characteristic of the Christians.[1] Not only did it become an important part of both public and private worship, but the sacred compositions, either of the early Christian bards, or of the Jewish canonical writers in Latin and Greek metrical versions, became so numerous and so popular, as wholly to banish those wanton songs, which are commonly the delight of the people, from the field, the workshop, and the festive circle. Nothing can be more interesting than the account given by one of the fathers, of the general employment of pious verse, as the medium of every joyful emotion: "So that," says he, "you could not go into the country, but you might hear the ploughman at his

[1] See the well-known epistle of Pliny to Trajan.

hallelujahs, the mower at his hymns, and the vine-dresser singing David's Psalms."[1] By degrees these emotions would be wrought into a higher strain. Skill would come to the aid of piety; and the bold, yet trembling hand of genius, too long accustomed to Apollo's lyre, would reverently take down the harp of the true Urania,[2] suspended by the altar. The Christian poets, previous to the revival of learning, do not indeed appear to have been aware of the greatness and interest of the subjects which the religion of the gospel had laid open to them; they lived in times and under circumstances little favourable to the development and discipline of their peculiar faculty. Yet there is much, in their remains, which taste as well as piety might suggest the wish to have better known. A sacred anthology collected and translated from the works of Gregory, Ambrose, Prudentius, Prosper, Sedulius, Fortunatus, Cosmos, and many others, some of whose names are unknown, but whose fragments are preserved in the collections,[3] would be no unworthy or undesirable addition to the poetic wreath of English literature.

Rich in almost every department of poetry, the literature of England may be considered particularly distinguished by the number and excellence of its

[1] Jerome, cited in Cave's Primitive Christianity, part i. ch. ix.
[2] Paradise Lost, book vii. Invocation.
[3] Poetæ Christiani Veteres, 4to. Ven. 1501, 4. Poetarum Veterum Ecclesiasticorum Opera, fol. Basle, 1564. Bibliotheca Patrum, Par. 1624, &c.

volumes of sacred verse;—more especially, if we include under this character a great part of many works, which, though not expressly upon Christian subjects, are more or less entitled to it by their occasional solemn views of the most important subjects of human reflection and enquiry. The general thoughtfulness of the national character may, perhaps, sufficiently account for this fact; to which, however, other concurrent circumstances should be added. Among these we may regard as the most influential the early publication of our vernacular Scriptures. It is impossible to reflect upon the incalculable influence which the free use of this noble version, by a great nation, in an affectionate and thankful spirit, for centuries, must have had upon the character of both people and literature; and, further, upon what would have been the diminished value of the boon, even for those who might have enjoyed it, had it been delayed to a much later period; without acknowledging a providence in the choice of the time when, and the instruments by whose means, this benefit was conferred. As yet, the language was in a gradual process of formation. Ductile, various, and manly—confined within no acknowledged rules, and checked by no fear of criticism—it was in a state admirably fitted to become the faithful mirror of the national character, which the publication of that great work was calculated so deeply to affect. The English Bible long supplied the chief intellectual as well

as spiritual food of Englishmen. The sublime thoughts and majestic style of the Hebrew prophets and historians sank deep into the popular mind; the language of the Scriptures became the basis of both poetry and prose: with many, it was the familiar vehicle of common discourse. A more admirable school could not be, for training the poetic energies of a people; and though all the benefits which might have resulted, did not follow, yet the distinctive character of English poetry, down to the present day, sufficiently evinces that they were not lost. During the century and half which followed the translation of the Scriptures, the effect is obvious. In spite of the frivolity of courts, (in those times the only patrons of literature,) of the increasing study of pagan authors, and of the fashions derived from Italy and Spain, the muse of England still haunted "Zion's Hill," —still loved the murmur of

> "Siloë's brook, that flow'd
> Fast by the oracle of God."

Nearly all the best poets of that period were sacred poets. Not that they all chose exclusively religious or moral subjects. Many indeed did so: Spenser, Gascoigne, Drayton, Davies, the Fletchers, Quarles, and others, had established the reputation of English literature, in this department, before the publication of the Paradise Lost indelibly stamped the religious upon it, as its leading

characteristic. But in spite of the indulgence of puerile fancy, of occasional coarse painting, and frequent licentiousness of language, we meet, in the works of nearly all the true poets of the seventeenth century, with more than implied and indirect acknowledgments of the serious, the responsible nature of their gifts and calling. We meet, not merely with moral reflections and references to subjects of imperishable interest, such as abound in the works of the pagan poets, and necessarily force themselves at times upon every thoughtful mind; but with an unaffected admission of the Christian doctrines, and the peculiar hopes and prospects founded upon them. That such topics sometimes only take their turn with others, with which they have nothing in common, and even their juxta-position with which is sufficiently harsh and unbecoming, favours the view now taken. The careless and incongruous mixture of the sacred and the secular —the former, however, mostly appearing as the real substratum of the character—indicates at least the sincerity and honest faith of the writer, whatever opinion it may oblige us to form of his taste. One of the most remarkable and decisive proofs of the tendency of the poetical genius of this century, and of the public taste, whether regarded as leading it, or led by it, is the extraordinary number of metrical versions of the Psalms, and lyrical compositions scattered throughout the Scriptures, which appeared between the Reformation and the close

of the Stuart dynasty; and of which several, though little known to the modern reader, are works of great merit.

The religious disputes which disturbed the reigns of Elizabeth and her immediate successors, great as were the evils that accompanied them, were attended with this, among other advantages, that they fixed religion more rootedly than ever in the general mind, as the object of profound and engrossing interest. The character both of the language and of the nation, had now attained the point most favourable for the production of a great poetical work, which might be expected to survive, both as a monument of its present condition, and a measure and model for the future. Our national epic bears the impress of these circumstances. Happily for English literature, its greatest, and still most popular poem, is eminently a religious work. The central orb of our poetic system shines with a direct 'light from heaven;' and as long as the mind of England remains capable of duly appreciating the merit of the Paradise Lost, no fears need be entertained, lest the unchastised extravagances of passion, and the meretricious charms of overwrought description, should win that permanent favour for vicious principles of composition, and the abandonment of *all* principle in more important matters, which has hitherto been accorded to serious, if not sacred, verse.

The well-known unguarded assertion of a great

writer and a good man,[1] that religious sentiments, and the ideas of Christian theology, cannot be fitly applied to poetical purposes, has been ably refuted; nor is there any need to revive the controversy.[2] The best answer to those critics who so willingly advocate the paradox of Johnson, is implied in such collections as that now before the reader. The author of the "Lives of the Poets" lived at a time, when no more than a very limited acquaintance with the elder writers of English verse, was deemed necessary for the directors of the public taste; nor need we hesitate to assert, that either the prejudices of his education, the morbid timidity of his religious feelings, closely bordering on superstition, or the coldness of his poetical temperament, warped his judgment in this particular. Some of those immortal productions of the diviner muse which furnish the practical evidences of his error—the works of Cowper and Montgomery for instance, have since been added to the treasures of our literature. That so many persons whose only qualification for the important task of the Christian poet, was their unquestionable piety, have deluged the land with dull and sometimes offensive verse, in the supposed service of religion, is sincerely to be lamented; because it has had the effect of averting tasteful, but indifferently-

[1] Johnson,—Life of Waller.

[2] See Mr. Montgomery's Introduction to "The Christian Poet;" the Quarterly Review, vol. xxxii. &c.

furnished minds from such reading altogether, and facilitated the adoption of the unfounded opinion of our great modern critic. Some writers also, who in other branches of poetry have displayed ability, and even genius, may have failed in this, for reasons not hard to assign: they were induced by circumstances to attempt a style which their entire habits of thought and life, had rendered uninteresting and uncongenial to them; and the result was as might have been anticipated—the hand thus unwarrantably laid upon the altar became paralyzed, and 'forgot its cunning.' But it would be difficult to point out, in what works, of a wholly secular character, greater warmth and tenderness of feeling, superior boldness and brilliancy of style, more exuberant wealth of poetry, or a more manly and vigorous exercise of intellectual power, are to be found, than in the publications that have furnished the present volume, and those of the same nature, by which it will be, at intervals, succeeded. Unequal and even strangely heterogeneous as the contents of some of those publications are, so richly fraught are many of them with solemn Christian thoughts, expressed in numbers such as genuine poetic genius alone could have uttered, that the editor is fully aware how little credit he can assume to himself, in the boast, that he deems the result of his labours worthy alike of a place in the library of the man of piety, or the man of taste—of the poet or the divine.

It is, however, chiefly in the character of aids and supports to pious thought and devotional feeling, that an earnest desire for its acceptableness with the public, attends the dismissal of this volume from the press. It is hoped, that many wearied and distressed soldiers of the Cross will find here refreshing "honey upon the ground," by which their strength will be renewed, and their 'eyes enlightened.'[1] Few moods of the Christian mind will be found to have been passed over in silence. In these diversified but mutually concordant pages, the devout soul is supplied with the language of praise and adoration—the penitent with the utterances of a contrite heart: the doubting will find the means of conviction; the sinner will be mildly but solemnly warned of his danger; the worldly and the hypocrite, reproved; the proud, humbled; the humble, raised and cheered: while he that takes up the book only for amusement and the delight which true poetry ever imparts, will assuredly find all he seeks,—and, haply, by the divine blessing, a far more precious and enduring profit.

R. C.

[1] 1 Sam. xiv. 27, 29.

London, Aug. 24, 1835.

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EDMUND SPENSER.

BORN about 1553; DIED 1598.

THIS delightful poet, although he seems never to have written without a moral purpose, has, in his principal work, notwithstanding its elaborate allegory, too often concealed the point of his lesson,—within such a rich profusion of poetic flowers, indeed, as could have been the produce only of an unrivalled fancy, enlivened by feelings at once tender and ardent. In the following pieces, however, the genius of the author of the "Faery Queene," is chastened to a degree of sobriety, consistent with the elevated and spiritual nature of the subjects treated.

SPENSER.

AN HYMN OF HEAVENLY LOVE.

Love, lift me upon thy golden wings
From this base world unto thy heaven's hight,
Where I may see those admirable things,
Which there thou workest by thy soveraine might,
Farre above feeble reach of earthly sight,
That I thereof an heavenly hymne may sing
Unto the God of love, high heaven's King.

Many lewd layes (ah! woe is me the more!)
In praise of that mad fit which fools call love,
I have in the heat of youth made heretofore,
That in light wits did loose affection move;
But all those follies now I do reprove,
And turned have the tenor of my string
The heavenly praises of true love to sing.

And ye, that wont with greedy, vain desire
To read my fault, and, wondering at my flame,
To warm yourselves at my wide sparkling fire,
Sith[1] now that heat is quenched, quench my blame,
And in her ashes shroud my dying shame;
For who my passed follies now pursues,
Begins his own, and my old fault renews.

[1] Since.

Before this world's great frame, in which all things
Are now contain'd, found any being place,
Ere flitting Time could wag his eyas[1] wings
About that mightie bound which doth embrace
The rolling spheres, and parts their houres by space,
That high Eternall Powre, which now doth move
In all these things, mov'd in itselfe by love.

It lov'd itselfe, because itselfe was faire;
(For fair is lov'd;) and of itself begot
Like to itselfe his eldest sonne and heire,
Eternall, pure, and voide of sinfull blot,
The firstling of his joy, in whom no jot
Of love's dislike or pride was to be found,
Whom he therefore with equal honour crown'd.

With him he ralgn'd before all time prescribed,
In endlesse glorie and immortall might,
Together with that third from them derived,
Most wise, most holy, most almightie Spright!
Whose kingdom's throne no thoughts of earthly wight
Can comprehend, much lesse my trembling verse
With equall words can hope it to reherse.

Yet, O most blessed Spirit! pure lamp of light,
Eternal spring of grace and wisdom true,
Vouchsafe to shed into my barren spright
Some little drop of thy celestial dew,
That may my rimes with sweet infuse embrew,
And give me words equal unto my thought,
To tell the marveils by thy mercy wrought.

[1] Young, newly fledged. An eyas is a young hawk, not yet fit for fligh..

Yet being pregnant still with powrefull grace,
And full of fruitfull love, that loves to get
Things like himselfe, and to enlarge his race,
His second brood, though not of powre so great,
Yet full of beautie, next he did beget,
An infinite increase of angels bright,
All glistring glorious in their Maker's light.

To them the heaven's illimitable hight,
(Not this round heaven, which we from hence behold,
Adorn'd with thousand lamps of burning light,
And with ten thousand gemmes of shyning gold,)
He gave as their inheritance to hold,
That they might serve him in eternal bliss,
And be partakers of those joyes of his.

There they in their trinall triplicities
About him wait, and on his will depend,
Either with nimble wings to cut the skies,
When he them on his messages doth send,
Or on his owne dread presence to attend,
Where they behold the glorie of his light,
And caroll hymnes of love both day and night.

Both day and night is unto them all one;
For he his beames doth unto them extend,
That darknesse there appeareth never none;
Ne hath their day, ne hath their blisse, an end,
But there their termelesse time in pleasure spend;
Ne ever should their happinesse decay,
Had not they dared the Lord to disobay.

But pride, impatient of long resting peace,
Did puffe them up with greedy bold ambition,

That they 'gan cast their state how to increase
Above the fortune of their first condition,
And sit in God's own seat without commission:
The brightest angel, even the child of light,
Drew millions more against their God to fight.

The Almighty, seeing their so bold assay,
Kindled the flame of his consuming ire,
And with his onely breath them blew away
From heaven's hight, to which they did aspire,
To deepest hell, and lake of damned fire,
Where they in darknesse and dread horror dwell,
Hating the happie light from which they fell.

So that next offspring of the Maker's love,
Next to himself in glorious degree,
Degenering to hate, fell from above
Through pride, (for pride and love may ill agree,)
And now of sin to all ensample bee:
How then can sinful flesh itself assure,
Sith purest angels fell to be impure?

But that Eternall Fount of love and grace,
Still flowing forth his goodnesse unto all,
Now seeing left a waste and emptie place
In his wide palace, through those angels' fall,
Cast to supply the same, and to enstall
A new unknowen colony therein,
Whose root from earth's base ground-worke should
begin.

Therefore of clay, base, vile, and next to nought,
Yet form'd by wondrous skill, and by his might,
According to an heavenly patterne wrought,

Which he had fashion'd in his wise foresight,
He man did make, and breathed a living spright
Into his face, most beautifull and faire,
Endew'd with wisdome's riches, heavenly rare.

Such he him made, that he resemble might
Himselfe, as mortall thing immortall could;
Him to be lord of every living wight
He made by love out of his owne like mould,
In whom he might his mightie selfe behould;
For love doth love the thing belov'd to see,
That like itselfe in lovely shape may bee.

But man, forgetfull of his Maker's grace,
No lesse than angels, whom he did ensew,[1]
Fell from the hope of promist heavenly place,
Into the mouth of Death, to sinners dew,
And all his off-spring into thraldome threw,
Where they for ever should in bonds remaine,
Of never-dead yet ever-dying paine.

Till that great Lord of Love, which him at first
Made of meere love, and after liked well,
Seeing him lie like creature long accurst
In that deep horror of despeired hell,
Him, wretch, in dole would let no longer dwell,
But cast out of that bondage to redeeme,
And pay the price, all were his debt extreeme.

Out of the bosome of eternall blisse,
In which he reigned with his glorious sire,
He downe descended, like a most demisse

[1] Follow.

And abject thrall, in fleshe's fraile attire,
That he for him might pay sinne's deadly hire,
And him restore unto that happie state
In which he stood before his haplesse fate.

In flesh at first the guilt committed was,
Therefore in flesh it must be satisfide;
Nor spirit, nor angel, though they man surpass,
Could make amends to God for man's misguide
But onely man himselfe, who selfe did slide:
So, taking flesh of sacred virgin's wombe,
For man's deare sake he did a man become.

And that most blessed bodie which was borne
Without all blemish or reprochfull blame,
He freely gave to be both rent and torne
Of cruell hands, who with despightfull shame
Reviling him, that them most vile became,
At length him nailed on a gallow-tree,
And slew the just by most unjust decree.

O huge and most unspeakable impression
Of Love's deep wound, that pierst the piteous heart
Of that dear Lord with so entire affection,
And sharply launcing every inner part,
Dolours of death into his soul did dart,
Doing him die that never it deserved,
To free his foes that from his heart had swerved!

What heart can feel least touch of so sore launch,
Or thought can think the depth of so deep wound?
Whose bleeding source their streams yet never staunch,
But still do flow, and freshly still redound,
To heal the sores of sinful souls unsound,

And cleanse the guilt of that infected crime
Which was enrooted in all fleshly slime.

O blessed Well of Love! O Floure of Grace!
O glorious Morning-Starre! O Lampe of Light!
Most lively image of thy Father's face,
Eternal King of Glorie, Lord of Might,
Meeke Lambe of God, before all worlds behight,[1]
How can we thee requite for all this good?
Or what can prize that thy most precious blood?

Yet nought thou ask'st in lieu of all this love,
But love of us, for guerdon of thy paine:
Ay me! what can us lesse than that behove?
Had he required life of us againe,
Had it beene wrong to ask his owne with gaine?
He gave us life, he it restored lost;
Then life were least, that us so little cost.

But he our life hath left unto us free,
Free that was thrall, and blessed that was ban'd;[2]
Ne ought demaunds but that we loving bee,
As he himselfe hath loved us afore-hand,
And bound thereto with an eternall band,
Him first to love that was so dearely bought,
And next our brethren, to his image wrought.

Him first to love great right and reason is,
Who first to us our life and being gave,
And after, when we fared had amiss,
Us wretches from the second death did save;
And last, the food of life, which now we have,
Even he himself, in his dear sacrament,
To feed our hungry soules, unto us lent.

[1] Named. [2] Cursed.

Then next, to love our brethren, that were made
Of that self mould, and that self Maker's hand
That we, and to the same again shall fade,
Where they shall have like heritage of land,
However here on higher steps we stand,
Which also were with self-same price redeemed
That we, however of us light esteemed.

And were they not, yet sith that loving Lord
Commanded us to love them for his sake,
Even for his sake, and for his sacred word,
Which in his last bequest he to us spake,
We should them love, and with their needs partake,
Knowing that whatsoe'er to them we give,
We give to him by whom we all do live.

Such mercy he by his most holy reed[1]
Unto us taught, and, to approve it true,
Ensampled it by his most righteous deed,
Shewing us mercy (miserable crew!)
That we the like should to the wretches shew,
And love our brethren, thereby to approve
How much himself that loved us we love.

Then rouze thyself, O earth! out of thy soil,
In which thou wallow'st like to filthy swine,
And dost thy mind in dirty pleasures moyl,
Unmindful of that dearest Lord of thine;
Lift up to him thy heavy-clouded eyne,
That thou this soveraine bounty maist behold,
And read through love his mercies manifold.

[1] Counsel.

Begin from first where he incradled was
In simple cratch, wrapt in a wad of hay,
Between the toilful oxe and humble ass,
And in what rags, and in how base array,
The glory of our heavenly riches lay,
When him the silly shepherds came to see,
Whom greatest princes sought on lowest knee.

From thence read on the story of his life,
His humble carriage, his unfaulty ways,
His cancred foes, his fights, his toils, his strife,
His pains, his poverty, his sharp assays,
Through which he past his miserable dayes,
Offending none, and doing good to all,
Yet being malic'd both of great and small.

And look at last, how of most wretched wights
He taken was, betray'd, and false accus'd,
How with most scornful taunts, and fell despights
He was revil'd, disgrac'd, and foul abus'd;
How scourg'd, how crown'd, how buffeted, how bruis'd;
And, lastly, how 'twixt robbers crucifide,
With bitter wound through hands, through feet, and side!

Then let thy flinty heart, that feels no pain,
Empierced be with pitiful remorse,
And let thy bowels bleed in every vein
At sight of his most sacred heavenly corse,
So torn and mangled with malicious force;
And let thy soul, whose sins his sorrows wrought,
Melt into tears, and grone in grieved thought.

With sense whereof, whilst so thy softened spirit
Is inly toucht, and humbled with meek zeal
Through meditation of his endless merit,
Lift up thy mind to th' Author of thy weal,
And to his soverain mercy do appeal;
Learn him to love that loved thee so dear,
And in thy breast his blessed image bear.

With all thy heart, with all thy soule and mind,
Thou must him love, and his behests embrace;
All other loves, with which the world doth blind
Weake fancies, and stirre up affections base,
Thou must renounce and utterly displace,
And give thy selfe unto him full and free,
That full and freely gave himselfe to thee.

Then shalt thou feele thy spirit so possest,
And ravisht with devouring great desire
Of his dear self, that shall thy feeble brest
Inflame with love, and set thee all on fire
With burning zeale, through every part entire,
That in no earthly thing thou shalt delight,
But in his sweet and amiable sight.

Thenceforth all world's desire will in thee die,
And all Earthe's glorie, on which men do gaze,
Seeme durt and drosse in thy pure-sighted eye,
Compared to that celestiall beautie's blaze,
Whose glorious beames all fleshly sense doth daze
With admiration of their passing light,
Blinding the eyes, and lumining the spright.

Then shall thy ravisht soul inspired bee
With heavenly thoughts, farre above humane skill,

And thy bright radiant eyes shall plainely see
The idee of his pure glorie present still
Before thy face, that all thy spirits shall fill
With sweete enragement of celestiall love,
Kindled through sight of those faire things above.

AN HYMN OF HEAVENLY BEAUTIE.

Rapt with the rage of mine own ravisht thought,
Through contemplation of those goodly sights,
And glorious images in heaven wrought,
Whose wondrous beauty, breathing sweet delights,
Doth kindle love in high conceited sprights;
I faine to tell the things that I behold,
But feele my wits to faile, and tongue to fold.

Vouchsafe then, O thou most Almightie Spright!
From whom all gifts of wit and knowledge flow,
To shed into my breast some sparkling light
Of thine eternall truth, that I may show
Some little beames to mortall eyes below
Of that immortall Beautie, there with thee,
Which in my weake distraughted mind I see;—

That with the glorie of so goodly sight
The hearts of men, which fondly here admire
Faire seeming shewes, and feed on vaine delight,
Transported with celestiall desire
Of those faire formes, may lift themselves up hier,
And learne to love, with zealous humble dewty,
The Eternall Fountaine of that heavenly beauty.

Beginning then below, with the easie vew
Of this base world, subject to fleshly eye,
From thence to mount aloft, by order dew,
To contemplation of the immortall sky;
Of the soare faulcon so I learne to flie,
That flags awhile her fluttering wings beneath,
Till she herselfe for stronger flight can breath.

Then looke, who list thy gazefull eyes to feed
With sight of that is faire, looke on the frame
Of this wide universe, and therein reed
The endlesse kinds of creatures, which by name
Thou canst not count, much less their natures' aime;
All which are made with wondrous wise respect,
And all with admirable beautie deckt.

First, the earth, on adamantine pillers founded
Amid the sea, engirt with brasen bands;
Then the aire still flitting, but yet firmely bounded
On everie side, with piles of flaming brands,
Never consumed, nor quencht with mortall hands;
And, last, that mightie shining cristall wall,
Wherewith he hath encompassed this All.

By view whereof it plainly may appear,
That still as every thing doth upward tend,
And further is from earth, so still more clear
And fair it grows, till to his perfect end
Of purest beauty it at last ascend;
Air more than water, fire much more than air,
And heaven than fire, appears more pure and fair.

Looke thou no further, but affixe thine eye
On that bright shinie round still moving masse,

The house of blessed God, which men call skie,
All sow'd with glistring stars more thicke then grasse,
Whereof each other doth in brightnesse passe,
But those two most, which, ruling night and day,
As king and queene, the heavens' empire sway;

And tell me then, what hast thou ever seene
That to their beautie may compared bee,
Or can the sight that is more sharpe and keene
Endure their captain's flaming head to see?
How much lesse those, much higher in degree,
And so much fairer, and much more then these,
As these are fairer then the land and seas?

For farre above these heavens, which here we see,
Be others farre exceeding these in light,
Not bounded, not corrupt, as these same bee,
But infinite in largenesse and in hight,
Unmoving, uncorrupt, and spotlesse bright,
That need no sunne to illuminate their spheres,
But their owne native light farre passing theirs.

And as these heavens still by degrees arise,
Until they come to their first Mover's bound,
That in his mighty compass doth comprise,
And carry all the rest with him around,
So those likewise do by degrees redound,
And rise more fair, till they at last arrive
To the most fair, whereto they all do strive.

Faire is the heaven where happy soules have place
In full enjoyment of felicitie,

Whence they doe still behold the glorious face
Of the Divine Eternall Majestie:
More faire is that, where those Idees on hie
Enranged be, which Plato so admired,
And pure Intelligences from God inspired.

Yet fairer is that heaven, in which do raine
The soveraigne powres and mightie potentates,
Which in their high protections doe containe
All mortall princes and imperiall states;
And fairer yet, whereas the royall seates
And heavenly dominations are set,
From whom all earthly governance is fet.[1]

Yet farre more faire be those bright cherubins,
Which all with golden wings are overdight,
And those eternall burning seraphins,
Which from their faces dart out fierie light;
Yet fairer than they both, and much more bright,
Be the angels and archangels, which attend
On God's owne person, without rest or end.

These thus in fair each other far excelling,
As to the highest they approach more near,
Yet is that highest far beyond all telling,
Fairer than all the rest which there appear,
Though all their beauties joyn'd together were;
How then can mortal tongue hope to express
The image of such endless perfectness?

Cease then, my tongue! and lend unto my mind
Leave to bethinke how great that beautie is,
Whose utmost parts so beautifull I find;

[1] Fetched.

How much more those essentiall parts of his,
His truth, his love, his wisdome, and his bliss,
His grace, his doome, his mercy, and his might,
By which he lends us of himselfe a sight!

Those unto all he daily doth display,
And shew himselfe in the image of his grace,
As in a looking-glasse, through which he may
Be seene of all his creatures, vile and base,
That are unable else to see his face,
His glorious face, which glistereth else so bright,
That the angels selves cannot endure his sight.

But we, fraile wights! whose sight cannot sustaine
The Sun's bright beames when he on us doth shine,
But that their points rebutted backe againe
Are dul'd, how we can see with feeble eyne
The glorie of that Majestie divine,
In sight of whom both sun and moone are darke,
Compared to his least resplendent sparke?

The means, therefore, which unto us is lent
Him to behold, is on his workes to looke,
Which he hath made in beauty excellent,
And in the same, as in a brasen booke,
To read enregistred in every nooke
His goodnesse, which his beautie doth declare;
For all that's good is beautifull and faire.

Thence gathering plumes of perfect speculation,
To impe[1] the wings of thy high flying mind,
Mount up aloft through heavenly contemplation,

[1] To furnish with new feathers.

From this darke world, whose damps the soule do
blind,
And, like the native brood of eagles kynd,
On that bright Sunne of Glorie fixe thine eyes,
Clear'd from grosse mists of fraile infirmities.

Humbled with feare and awfull reverence,
Before the footestoole of his Majestie
Throw thy selfe downe, with trembling innocence,
Ne dare looke up with corruptible eye
On the dred face of that Great Deity,
For feare, lest if he chaunce to look on thee,
Thou turne to nought, and quite confounded bee.

But lowly fall before his mercie seate,
Close covered with the Lambe's integrity
From the just wrath of his avengeful threat
That sits upon the righteous throne on hie;
His throne is built upon eternity,
More firm and durable than steele or brasse,
Or the hard diamond, which them both doth passe.

His scepter is the rod of Righteousness,
With which he bruseth all his foes to dust,
And the great dragon strongly doth represse
Under the rigour of his judgment just;
His seate is Truth, to which the faithfull trust,
From whence proceed her beames so pure and bright
That all about him sheddeth glorious light:

Light, farre exceeding that bright blazing sparke
Which darted is from Titan's flaming head,
That with his beames enlumineth the darke
And dampish air, whereby all things are red;
Whose nature yet so much is marvelled

Of mortall wits, that it doth much amaze
The greatest wisards which thereon do gaze.

But that immortall light, which there doth shine,
Is many thousand times more bright, more cleare,
More excellent, more glorious more divine,
Through which to God, all mortall actions here,
And even the thoughts of men, do plaine appeare;
For from the Eternall Truth it doth proceed,
Through heavenly vertue which her beames doe
breed.

With the great glorie of that wondrous light
His throne is all encompassed around,
And hid in his owne brightnesse from the sight
Of all that looke thereon with eyes unsound;
And underneath his feet are to be found
Thunder, and lightning, and tempestuous fire,
The instruments of his avenging ire.

There in his bosome Sapience doth sit,
The soveraine dearling of the Deity,
Clad like a queene in royall robes, most fit
For so great powre and peerelesse majesty,
And all with gemmes and jewels gorgeously
Adorn'd, that brighter than the starres appeare,
And make her native brightness seem more cleare.

And on her head a crown of purest gold
Is set, in sign of highest sovereignty,
And in her hand a sceptre she doth hold,
With which she rules the house of God on high,
And manageth the ever-moving sky,
And in the same these lower creatures all
Subjected to her powre imperial.

Both heaven and earth obey unto her will,
And all the creatures which they both containe;
For of her fulnesse which the world doth fill
They all partake, and do in state remaine,
As their great Maker did at first ordaine,
Through observation of her high beheast,
By which they first were made, and still increast.

The fairnesse of her face no tongue can tell;
For she the daughters of all women's race,
And angels eke,[1] in beautie doth excell,
Sparkled on her from God's owne glorious face,
And more increast by her owne goodly grace,
That it doth farre exceed all human thought,
Ne can on Earth compared be to ought.

Ne could that painter (had he lived yet)
Which pictur'd Venus with so curious quill,
That all posterity admired it,
Have pourtray'd this, for all his maistring skill;
Ne she herself, had she remained still,
And were as fair as fabling wits do feign,
Could once come near this beauty soveraign.

But had those wits, the wonders of their days,
Or that sweet Teian poet, which did spend
His plenteous vein in setting forth his praise,
Seen but a glimpse of this which I pretend,
How wondrously would he her face commend,
Above that idole of his feigning thought,
That all the world should with his rimes be fraught!

How then dare I, the novice of his art,
Presume to picture so divine a wight,

[1] Also.

Or hope to express her least perfection's part,
Whose beauty fills the heavens with her light,
And darks the earth with shadow of her sight?
Ah, gentle muse! thou art too weak and faint
The pourtrait of so heavenly hue to paint.

Let angels, which her goodly face behold
And see at will, her soveraigne praises sing,
And those most sacred mysteries unfold
Of that faire love of mightie Heaven's King;
Enough is me to admyre so heavenly thing,
And, being thus with her huge love possest
In the only wonder of herselfe to rest.

But whoso may, thrise happie man him hold,
Of all on earth whom God so much doth grace,
And lets his owne beloved to behold;
For in the view of her celestiall face
All joy, all blisse, all happinesse, have place;
Ne ought on earth can want unto the wight
Who of herselfe can win the wishfull sight.

For she, out of her secret treasury,
Plenty of riches forth on him will pour,
Even heavenly riches, which there hidden lie
Within the closet of her chastest bowre,
The eternal portion of her precious dowre,
Which mighty God hath given to her free,
And to all those which thereof worthy bee.

None thereof worthy bee but those whom she
Vouchsafeth to her presence to receive,
And letteth them her lovely face to see,
Whereof such wondrous pleasures they conceive,
And sweet contentment, that it doth bereave

Their soul of sense through infinite delight,
And them transport from flesh into the spright.

In which they see such admirable things,
As carries them into an extasy,
And hear such heavenly notes and carolings
Of God's high praise, that fills the brazen sky,
And feel such joy and pleasure inwardly,
That maketh them all worldly cares forget,
And only think on that before them set.

Ne from thenceforth doth any fleshy sense
Or idle thought of earthly things remain,
But all that earst seem'd sweet seems now offence,
And all that pleased earst now seems to pain:
Their joy, their comfort, their desire, their gain,
Is fixed all on that which now they see;
All other sights but fained shadowes bee.

And that fair lampe which useth to inflame
The hearts of men with self-consuming fire,
Thenceforth seems foul, and full of sinful blame;
And all that pomp to which proud minds aspire
By name of honour, and so much desire,
Seems to them baseness, and all riches dross,
And all mirth sadness, and all lucre loss.

So full their eyes are of that glorious sight,
And senses fraught with such satietie,
That in nought else on earth they can delight,
But in the respect of that felicitie,
Which they have written in their inward eye;
On which they feed, and in their fast'ned mind
All happy joy and full contentment find.

Ah, then, my hungry soul! which long hast fed
On idle fancies of thy foolish thought,
And, with false beautie's flattring bait misled,
Hast after vaine deceitfull shadowes sought,
Which all are fled, and now have left thee nought
But late repentance through thy follies' prief;[1]
Ah! ceasse to gaze on matter of thy grief:—

And looke at last up to that Soveraine Light,
From whose pure beams all perfect beauty springs,
That kindleth love in every godly spright,
Even the love of God; which loathing brings
Of this vile world and these gay-seeming things;
With whose sweet pleasures being so possest,
Thy straying thoughts henceforth for ever rest.

[1] Proof.

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

BORN 1570; DIED 1626.

SIR JOHN DAVIES was an eminent lawyer in the reigns of Queen Elizabeth and James I. His chief literary production is entitled "Nosce Teipsum, or the Soul of Man and the Immortality thereof." From this poem the ensuing extracts are taken. It is remarkable for the clear and logical conduct of the argument; and, among the productions of that age, for the smooth and equable flow of its verse.

SIR JOHN DAVIES.

FALSE AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE.

Why did my parents send me to the schools,
That I with knowledge might enrich my mind,
Since the desire to know first made men fools,
And did corrupt the root of all mankind?

For when God's hand had written in the hearts
Of our first parents all the rules of good,
So that their skill infus'd surpass'd all arts
That ever were, before or since the flood;

And when their reason's eye was sharp and clear,
And, as an eagle can behold the sun,
Could have approach'd th' eternal light as near
As the intellectual angels could have done;

Ev'n then to them the spirit of lies suggests,
That they were blind, because they saw not ill;
And breath'd into their incorrupted breasts
A curious wish, which did corrupt their will.

From that same ill, they straight desir'd to know;
Which ill being naught but a defect of good,
In all God's works the devil could not show,
While man, their lord, in his perfection stood:

So that themselves were first to do the ill,
Ere they thereof the knowledge could attain;
Like him that knew not poison's power to kill,
Until, by tasting it, himself was slain.

Ev'n so, by tasting of that fruit forbid,
Where they sought knowledge, they did error find;
Ill they desir'd to know, and ill they did;
And, to give passion eyes, made reason blind;

For then their minds did first in passion see
Those wretched shapes of misery and woe,
Of nakedness, of shame, of poverty,
Which then their own experience made them know.

But then grew reason dark, that she no more
Could the fair forms of good and truth discern;
Bats they became, who eagles were before,
And this they got by their desire to learn.

But we, their wretched offspring, what do we?
Do not we still taste of the fruit forbid,
While with fond fruitless curiosity,
In books profane we seek for knowledge hid?

What is this knowledge, but the sky-stol'n fire,
For which the thief[1] still chain'd in ice doth sit;
And which the poor rude satyr[2] did admire,
And needs would kiss, but burnt his lips with it?

[1] Prometheus. [2] See Æsop's Fables.

What is it, but the cloud of empty rain,
Which when Jove's guest[1] embrac'd he monsters got?
Or the false pails,[2] which oft being fill'd with pain,
Receiv'd the water, but retain'd it not?

In fine, what is it but the fiery coach,
Which the youth[3] sought, and sought his death withal?
Or the boy's[4] wings, which when he did approach
The sun's hot beams, did melt and let him fall?

And yet, alas! when all our lamps are burn'd,
Our bodies wasted and our spirits spent;
When we have all the learned volumes turn'd,
Which yield men's wits both help and ornament;

What can we know or what can we discern,
When error clouds the windows of the mind?
The divers forms of things how can we learn,
That have been ever from our birth-day blind?

When reason's lamp, which, like the sun in sky,
Throughout man's little world her beams did spread,
Is now become a sparkle, which doth lie
Under the ashes, half extinct and dead;

How can we hope that through the eye and ear,
This dying sparkle, in this cloudy place,
Can recollect those beams of knowledge clear,
Which were infus'd in the first minds by grace?

So might the heir, whose father hath in play
Wasted a thousand pounds of ancient rent,

[1] Ixion. [2] The Danaïdes. [3] Phaëton. [4] Icarus.

By painful earning of one groat a day,
Hope to restore the patrimony spent.

The wits that div'd most deep, and soar'd most high,
Seeking man's powers, have found his weakness such:
Skill comes so slow, and life so fast doth fly;
We learn so little, and forget so much:

For this the wisest of all moral men
Said, he knew naught, but that he nought did know;
And the great mocking master mock'd not then,
When he said, truth was buried here below.

For how may we to other things attain,
When none of us his own soul understands?
For which the devil mocks our curious brain,
When—Know thyself, his oracle commands.

For why should we the busy soul believe,
When boldly she concludes of that and this;
When of herself she can no judgment give,
Nor how, nor whence, nor where, nor what she is?

All things without, which round about we see,
We seek to know, and how therewith to do:
But that whereby we reason, live, and be,
Within ourselves, we strangers are thereto.

We seek to know the moving of each sphere,
And the strange cause o' th' ebbs and floods of Nile;
But of that clock which in our breasts we bear,
The subtle motions we forget the while.

We that acquaint ourselves with every zone,
And pass both tropics, and behold both poles;
When we come home, are to ourselves unknown,
And unacquainted still with our own souls.

We study speech, but others we persuade;
We leech-craft learn, but others cure with it:
We interpret laws which other men have made,
But read not those which in our hearts are writ.

Is it because the mind is like the eye,
Through which it gathers knowledge by degrees;
Whose rays reflect not, but spread outwardly;
Not seeing itself, when other things it sees?

No, doubtless; for the mind can backward cast,
Upon herself, her understanding light;
But she is so corrupt, and so defac'd,
As her own image doth herself affright.

As is the fable of the lady fair,
Which for her lust was turn'd into a cow;
When thirsty, to a stream she did repair,
And saw herself transform'd she wist not how;

At first she startles, then she stands amaz'd;
At last with terror she from hence doth fly,
And loathes the wat'ry glass wherein she gaz'd,
And shuns it still, although for thirst she die:

Ev'n so man's soul, which did God's image bear,
And was at first fair, good, and spotless pure;
Since with her sins her beauties blotted were,
Doth of all sights, her own sight least endure;

For ev'n at first reflection she espies
Such strange chimeras, and such monsters there;
Such toys, such antics, and such vanities,
As she retires and shrinks for shame and fear.

And as the man loves least at home to be,
That hath a sluttish house, haunted with sprites;
So she, impatient her own faults to see,
Turns from herself, and in strange things delights.

For this, few know themselves, for merchants broke,
View their estate with discontent and pain;
As seas are troubled, when they do revoke
Their flowing waves into themselves again.

And while the face of outward things we find,
Pleasing and fair, agreeable and sweet,
These things transport, and carry out the mind,
That with herself, the mind can never meet.

Yet if affliction once her wars begin,
And threat the feebler sense with sword and fire,
The mind contracts herself and shrinketh in,
And to herself she gladly doth retire;

As spiders touch'd seek their web's inmost part;
As bees in storms back to their hives return;
As blood in danger gathers to the heart;
As men seek towns, when foes the country burn.

If aught can teach us aught, affliction's looks,
Making us pry into ourselves so near,
Teach us to know ourselves beyond our books,
Or all the learned schools that ever were.

This mistress lately pluck'd me by the ear,
And many a golden lesson hath me taught;
Hath made my senses quick, and reason clear,
Reform'd my will, and rectified my thought.

So do the winds and thunders cleanse the air;
So working lees settle and purge the wine;
So lopp'd and pruned trees do flourish fair;
So doth the fire the drossy gold refine.

Neither Minerva, nor the learned muse,
Nor rules of art, nor precepts of the wise,
Could in my brain those beams of skill infuse,
As but the glance of this dame's angry eyes.

She within lists my ranging mind hath brought,
That now beyond myself I will not go;
Myself am centre of my circling thought,
Only myself I study, learn, and know:

I know my body's of so frail a kind,
As force without, fevers within can kill;
I know the heavenly nature of my mind,
But 'tis corrupted both in wit and will.

I know my soul hath power to know all things,
Yet is she blind and ignorant in all;
I know I'm one of nature's little kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things am thrall.

I know my life's a pain, and but a span;
I know my sense is mock'd in ev'ry thing;
And, to conclude, I know myself a man,
Which is proud, and yet a wretched thing.

THE DIGNITY OF MAN.

Oh! what is man, great Maker of mankind!
That thou to him so great respect dost bear;
That thou adorn'st him with so bright a mind,
Mak'st him a king, and ev'n an angel's peer?

Oh! what a lively life, what heav'nly pow'r,
What spreading virtue, what a sparkling fire,
How great, how plentiful, how rich a dow'r
Dost thou within this dying flesh inspire!

Thou leav'st thy print in other works of thine,
But thy whole image thou in man hast writ;
There cannot be a creature more divine,
Except, like thee, it should be infinite:

But it exceeds man's thought, to think how high
God hath rais'd man, since God a man became;
The angels do admire this mystery,
And are astonish'd when they view the same:

Nor hath he giv'n these blessings for a day,
Nor made them on the body's life depend;
The soul, though made in time, survives for aye;
And though it hath beginning, sees no end.

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL, PROVED BY SEVERAL REASONS.

Her only end, is never-ending bliss;
Which is, the eternal face of God to see;
Who, last of ends, and first of causes is:
And to do this, she must eternal be.

How senseless then, and dead a soul hath he,
Which thinks his soul doth with his body die;
Or thinks not so, but so would have it be,
That he might sin with more security!

For though these light and vicious persons say,
"Our soul is but a smoke, or airy blast,
Which, during life, doth in her nostrils play,
And when we die, doth turn to wind at last;"

Although they say, "Come, let us eat and drink;
Our life is but a spark, which quickly dies:"
Though thus they say, they know not what to think,
But in their minds ten thousand doubts arise.

Therefore no heretics desire to spread
Their light opinions, like these epicures;
For so their stagg'ring thoughts are comforted,
And other men's assent their doubt assures.

Yet, tho' these men against their conscience strive,
There are some sparkles in their flinty breasts,
Which cannot be extinct, but still revive;
That tho' they would, they cannot quite be beasts.

But whoso makes a mirror of his mind,
And doth with patience view himself therein,
His soul's eternity shall clearly find,
Though the other beauties be defaced with sin.

First, in man's mind we find an appetite
To learn and know the truth of ev'ry thing,
Which is co-natural, and born with it,
And from the essence of the soul doth spring.

With this desire, she hath a native might
To find out ev'ry truth, if she had time;
The innumerable effects to sort aright,
And by degrees, from cause to cause to climb.

But since our life so fast away doth slide,
As doth an hungry eagle through the wind,
Or as a ship transported with the tide,
Which in their passage leave no print behind;

Of which swift little time so much we spend,
While some few things we through the sense do strain,
That our short race of life is at an end,
Ere we the principles of skill attain;

Or God, who to vain ends hath nothing done,
In vain this appetite and pow'r hath giv'n;
Or else our knowledge, which is here begun,
Hereafter must be perfected in heav'n.

God never gave a pow'r to one whole kind,
But most part of that kind did use the same:
Most eyes have perfect sight, though some be blind;
Most legs can nimbly run, though some be lame:

But in this life no soul the truth can know
So perfectly, as it hath pow'r to do:
If then perfection be not found below,
An higher place must make her mount thereto.

Again, How can she but immortal be,
When with the motions of both will and wit,
She still aspireth to eternity,
And never rests, till she attains to it?

Water in conduit-pipes can rise no higher
Than the well-head from whence it first doth spring:
Then since to eternal God she doth aspire,
She cannot be but an eternal thing.

All moving things to other things do move,
Of the same kind, which shows their nature such:
So earth falls down, and fire doth mount above,
Till both their proper elements do touch.

And as the moisture, which the thirsty earth
Sucks from the sea, to fill her empty veins,
From out her womb at last doth take a birth,
And runs a nymph along the grassy plains;

Long doth she stay, as loath to leave the land,
From whose soft side she first did issue make;
She tastes all places, turns to ev'ry hand,
Her flow'ry banks unwilling to forsake;

Yet nature so her streams doth lead and carry,
As that her course doth make no final stay,
Till she herself unto the ocean marry,
Within whose wat'ry bosom first she lay:

Ev'n so the soul, which in this earthly mould
The Spirit of God doth secretly infuse,
Because at first she doth the earth behold,
And only this material world she views,—

At first her mother-earth she holdeth dear,
And doth embrace the world and worldly things;
She flies close by the ground, and hovers here,
And mounts not up with her celestial wings:

Yet under heaven she cannot light on aught,
That with her heav'nly nature doth agree;
She cannot rest, she cannot fix her thought,
She cannot in this world contented be.

For who did ever yet, in honour, wealth,
Or pleasure of the sense, contentment find?
Who ever ceas'd to wish, when he had health?
Or having wisdom, was not vex'd in mind?

Then as a bee, which among weeds doth fall,
Which seem sweet flow'rs, with lustre fresh and gay;
She lights on that, and this, and tasteth all,
But pleas'd with none, doth rise and soar away;

So, when the soul finds here no true content,
And, like Noah's dove, can no sure footing take,
She doth return from whence she first was sent,
And flies to him that first her wings did make.

Wit, seeing truth, from cause to cause ascends,
And never rests, till it the first attain;
Will, seeking good, finds many middle ends,
But never stays, till it the last do gain.

Now God the truth, and first of causes is;
God is the last good end, which lasteth still;
Being Alpha and Omega nam'd for this;
Alpha to wit, Omega to the will:

Sith then her heav'nly kind she doth display,
In that to God she doth directly move;
And on no mortal thing can make her stay,
She cannot be from hence, but from above.

And yet this first true cause, and last good end,
She cannot here so well and truly see;
For this perfection she must yet attend,
Till to her Maker she espoused be.

As a king's daughter, being in person sought
Of divers princes, who do neighbour near,
On none of them can fix a constant thought,
Though she to all do lend a gentle ear;

Yet can she love a foreign emperor,
Whom of great worth and pow'r she hears to be,
If she be woo'd but by ambassador,
Or but his letters, or his picture, see;

For well she knows, that when she shall be brought
Into the kingdom where her spouse doth reign;
Her eyes shall see what she conceiv'd in thought,
Himself, his state, his glory, and his train:

So while the virgin soul on earth doth stay,
She woo'd and tempted is ten thousand ways
By these great pow'rs, which on the earth bear sway,
The wisdom of the world, wealth, pleasure, praise:

With these sometime she doth her time beguile,
These do by fits her fantasy possess;
But she distates them all within a while,
And in the sweetest finds a tediousness;

But if upon the world's almighty King
She once doth fix her humble loving thought,
Who by his picture drawn in ev'ry thing,
And sacred messages, her love hath sought;

Of him she thinks she cannot think too much;
This honey tasted, still is ever sweet;
The pleasure of her ravish'd thought is such,
As almost here she with her bliss doth meet:

But when in heav'n she shall his essence see,
This is her sov'reign good, and perfect bliss;
Her longings, wishings, hopes, all finish'd be,
Her joys are full, her motions rest in this:

There is she crown'd with garlands of content;
There doth she manna eat, and nectar drink;
That presence doth such high delights present,
As never tongue could speak, nor heart could think.

For this, the better souls do oft despise
The body's death, and do it oft desire;
For when on ground the burden'd balance lies,
The empty part is lifted up the higher:

But if the body's death the soul should kill,
Then death must needs against her nature be;
And were it so, all souls would fly it still,
For nature hates and shuns her contrary;

For all things else, which nature makes to be,
Their being to preserve, are chiefly taught;
And though some things desire a change to see,
Yet never thing did long to turn to nought.

If then by death the soul were quenched quite,
She could not thus against her nature run;
Since ev'ry senseless thing, by nature's light,
Doth preservation seek, destruction shun;

Nor could the world's best spirits so much err,
If death took all, that they should all agree,
Before this life their honour to prefer;
For what is praise to things that nothing be?

Again, if by the body's prop she stand;
If on the body's life, her life depend,
As Meleager's on the fatal brand,
The body's good she only would intend:

We should not find her half so brave and bold,
To lead it to the wars, and to the seas,
To make it suffer watchings, hunger, cold,
When it might feed with plenty, rest with ease.

Doubtless, all souls have a surviving thought,
Therefore of death we think with quiet mind;
But if we think of being turn'd to nought,
A trembling horror in our souls we find.

And as the better spirit, when she doth bear
A scorn of death, doth show she cannot die;
So when the wicked soul death's face doth fear,
Even then she proves her own eternity.

For when death's form appears, she feareth not
An utter quenching, or extinguishment;
She would be glad to meet with such a lot,
That so she might all future ill prevent;

But she doth doubt what after may befal;
For nature's law accuseth her within,
And saith, 'tis true what is affirm'd by all,
That after death there is a pain for sin.

Then she who hath been hood-wink'd from her birth,
Doth first herself within death's mirror see;
And when her body doth return to earth,
She first takes care, how she alone shall be.

Who ever sees these irreligious men,
With burden of a sickness weak and faint,
But hears them talking of religion then,
And vowing of their souls to ev'ry saint?

When was there ever cursed atheist brought
Unto the gibbet, but he did adore
That blessed Pow'r, which he had set at naught,
Scorn'd and blasphemed all his life before?

These light vain persons still are drunk and mad,
With surfeitings, and pleasures of their youth;
But at their death they are fresh, sober, sad;
Then they discern, and then they speak the truth.

If then all souls, both good and bad, do teach,
With gen'ral voice, that souls can never die;
'Tis not man's flatt'ring gloss, but nature's speech,
Which, like God's oracles, can never lie.

Hence springs that universal strong desire,
Which all men have of immortality:
Not some few spirits unto this thought aspire,
But all men's minds in this united be.

Then this desire of nature is not vain,
She covets not impossibilities;
Fond thoughts may fall into some idle brain,
But one assent of all is ever wise:

From hence that gen'ral care and study springs,
That launching, and progression of the mind,
Which all men have so much of future things,
As they no joy do in the present find.

From this desire, that main desire proceeds,
Which all men have surviving fame to gain,
By tombs, by books, by memorable deeds;
For she that this desires, doth still remain.

Hence, lastly, springs care of posterities,
For things their kind would everlasting make:
Hence is it, that old men do plant young trees,
The fruit whereof another age shall take.

If we these rules unto ourselves apply,
And view them by reflection of the mind,
All these true notes of immortality
In our heart's tables we shall written find.

And tho' some impious wits do questions move,
And doubt if souls immortal be, or no;
That doubt their immortality doth prove,
Because they seem immortal things to know.

For he who reasons on both parts doth bring,
Doth some things mortal, some immortal call;
Now, if himself were but a mortal thing,
He could not judge immortal things at all:

For when we judge, our minds we mirrors make;
And as those glasses which material be,
Forms of material things do only take;
For thoughts or minds in them we cannot see;

So when we God and angels do conceive,
And think of truth, which is eternal too;
Then do our minds immortal forms receive,
Which if they mortal were, they could not do.

And as if beasts conceiv'd what reason were,
And that conception should distinctly show,
They should the name of reasonable bear;
For without reason, none could reason know;

So when the soul mounts with so high a wing,
As of eternal things she doubts can move;
She proofs of her eternity doth bring,
Ev'n when she strives the contrary to prove:

For ev'n the thought of immortality,
Being an act done without the body's aid,
Shows, that herself alone could move and be,
Although the body in the grave were laid.

WORTH OF THE SOUL.

O IGNORANT poor man! what dost thou bear,
Lock'd up within the casket of thy breast?
What jewels, and what riches hast thou there?
What heav'nly treasure in so weak a chest?

Look in thy soul, and thou shalt beauties find,
Like those which drown'd Narcissus in the flood:
Honour and pleasure both are in my mind,
And all that in the world is counted good.

Think of her worth; and think, that God did mean
This worthy mind should worthy things embrace;
Blot not her beauties with thy thoughts unclean,
Nor her dishonour with thy passion base.

Kill not her quick'ning power with surfeitings;
Mar not her sense with sensuality:
Cast not her serious wit on idle things;
Make not her free-will slave to vanity.

And, when thou think'st of her eternity,
Think not that death against our nature is;
Think it a birth: and when thou go'st to die,
Sing like a swan, as if thou went'st to bliss.

And thou, my soul, which turn'st with curious eye,
To view the beams of thine own form divine,
Know, that thou canst know nothing perfectly,
While thou art clouded with this flesh of mine.

Take heed of over-weening, and compare
Thy peacock's feet with thy gay peacock's train:

Study the best and highest things that are,
But of thyself an humble thought retain.

Cast down thyself, and only strive to raise
The glory of thy Maker's sacred name:
Use all thy pow'rs, that blessed pow'r to praise,
Which gives thee pow'r to be, and use the same.

GEORGE SANDYS.

BORN 1577; DIED 1643.

THE principal works of this pious and learned writer are, his well-known volume of "Travels" in the East; his translation of Ovid's Metamorphoses, and of the "Christus Patiens" of Grotius; and "A Paraphrase upon the Psalms of David, and upon the Hymns dispersed throughout the Old and New Testaments."

Among the many attempts which have been made to render the incomparable songs of the inspired lyrists into English metre, no other displays, equally with that of Sandys, the combination of poetry with terse and correct versification, and a strict adherence to the sense of the original. We are less inclined to charge Bishop Henry King, with the friendly use of a poetic license, in thus describing this translation—

> "Here David—as he could his skill transfer—
> Speaks like himself by an interpreter:
> Your muse rekindled hath the prophet's fire,
> And tun'd the strings of his neglected lyre,"—

than to lament that what he predicted respecting the permanence of its reputation, should have so signally failed of accomplishment:

> "Nor need you fear the poet's common lot—
> Read, and commended, and then quite forgot:
> The brazen mines and marble rocks shall waste,
> When your foundation shall unshaken last;
> For ne'er was writer in oblivion hid,
> Who firm'd his name on such a pyramid"—

is a judgment in melancholy contrast with the present obscurity of Sandys' able version.

SANDYS.

PSALM XIII.

How long! Lord, let me not
For ever be forgot!
How long, my God, wilt thou
Contract thy clouded brow!
How long in mind perplext
Shall I be daily vext!
How long shall he control,
Who persecutes my soul!
Consider, hear my cries;
Illuminate mine eyes;
Lest with exhausted breath
I ever sleep in death;
Lest my insulting foe
Boast in my overthrow;
And those who would destroy,
In my subversion joy.
But I, thou ever just,
Will in thy mercy trust;
And in thy saving grace
My constant comfort place:
My songs shall sing thy praise,
That hast prolong'd my days.

PSALM XX.

THE Lord in thy adversity
Regard thy cry;
Great Jacob's God with safety arm,
And shield from harm:
Help from his sanctuary send,
And out of Sion thee defend.

Thy odours, which pure flames consume
Be his perfume.
May he accept thy sacrifice,
Fir'd from the skies.
For ever thy endeavours bless,
And crown thy counsels with success.

We will of thy deliverance sing,
Triumphant King:
Our ensigns in that prayed-for day
With joy display;
Even in the name of God. O still
May he thy just desires fulfil!

Now know I his anointed he
Will hear, and free;
With saving hand and mighty power,
From his high tower.
They trust in horse; in chariots those;
Our trust we in our God repose.

Their wounded limbs with anguish bend,
To death descend:
But we in fervour of the fight
Have stood upright.

O save us, Lord; thy suppliants hear;
And in our aid, great King, appear.

PSALM XXVI.

LORD, judge my cause: thy piercing eye
Beholds my soul's integrity.
How can I fall,
When I, and all
My hopes on thee rely?
Examine, try my reins and heart!
Thou mercy's source, my object art;
Nor from thy truth
Have I in youth,
Or will in age depart.
Men sold to sin offend my sight;
I hate the two-tongu'd hypocrite;
Those who devise
Malicious lies,
And in their crimes delight.
But will with hands immaculate,
And offerings at thy altar wait:
Thy praise disperse
In grateful verse;
Thy noble acts relate.
Thy house, in my esteem, excels;
The mansion where thy glory dwells.
My life O close
Not up with those,
Whose sins thy grace expels!

Who guiltless blood with pleasure spill;
Subverting bribes their right-hands fill;

Bold in offence.
But innocence
And truth shall guard me still.

Redeem; O with thy grace sustain!
My feet now stand upon the plain.
Thy justice I
Will magnify,
With those who fear thy name.

PSALM XXXV.

LORD, plead my cause against my foes;
With such as fight against me, fight:
Arise; thy ample shield oppose,
And with thy sword defend my right.
Address thy spear; those in their way
Encounter who my soul invade:
To her O let thy Spirit say,
I am thy God and saving aid.
Let those, who my disgrace contrive,
Hang down their heads, for flight design'd:
Who seek my fall, let angels drive
Like chaff before the blust'ring wind.
Obscure and slippery be their path;
Let winged troops pursue their foil;[1]
Since they for me with causeless wrath
Have digg'd a pit, and pitch'd a toil,
Let sudden ruin them destroy;
Mesh'd in the nets themselves had laid:
Then in the Lord my soul shall joy,
And glory in his timely aid.

[1] Defeat.

My bones shall say, O who like thee,
That arm'st the weak against the strong;
That dost the poor and needy free
From outrage, and too powerful wrong?
False witnesses against me stood,
Who unknown accusations brought:
That evil rendered for good,
And closely my confusion sought.
I in their sickness did condole;
Unfeignedly in sackcloth mourn'd:
With fasting humbled my sad soul,
And often to my prayers return'd:
Him visited both night and day,
As if an ancient friend or brother:
In black upon the earth I lay,
And wept as for my dying mother.
Yet these rejoiced in my woe;
False comforters about me crowd;
And lest I should their cunning know,
They rent their clothes and cried aloud.
Like hypocrites at feasts, they jeer;
Whose gnashing teeth their hate profess,
O Lord, how long wilt thou forbear,
And only look on my distress?
O save from those who smile and kill,
My darling from the lion's jaws:
I in the great assembly will
Then praise thy name with full applause.
Let not my causeless enemies
Rejoice in my afflicted state;
Nor wink at me with scornful eyes,
Who swell with undeserved hate.
Of peace they speak not; rather they
The peaceable with fraud pursue:

Who wry their mouths at me, and say,
Ha! ha! our eyes thy ruin view.
This seen, O stand no longer mute;
Nor, Lord, desert my innocence:
Awake, arise: O prosecute
My cause, and plead in my defence.
With justice judge: nor let them say
In triumph, We our wish possess:
Nor in their mirthful hearts, ha! ha!
We've swallowed him in his distress.
Wrath and confusion seize on those
Who in my tribulation joy;
Let them who glory in my woes,
Be clothed with shame and infamy.
Let those eternally rejoice,
Who favour and assist my right;
For ever with exalted voice,
The goodness of our God recite:
And say, O magnify his name
Who glories in his servant's peace.
My tongue his justice shall proclaim,
Nor ever in his praises cease.

PSALM XLII.

Lord! as the hart emboss'd with heat
Brays after the cool rivulet,
So sighs my soul for thee.
My soul thirsts for the living God:
When shall I enter his abode,
And there his beauty see?

Tears are my food both night and day;
While, Where's thy God? they daily say,
  My soul in plaints I shed;
When I remember, how in throngs
We fill'd thy house with praise and songs;
  How I their dances led.

My soul, why art thou so deprest?
Why, O! thus troubled in my breast,
  With grief so overthrown?
With constant hope on God await:
I yet his name shall celebrate,
  For mercy timely shown?

My fainting heart within me pants:
My God, consider my complaints;
  My songs shall praise thee still.
Even from the vale where Jordan flows;
Where Hermon his high forehead shows,
  From Mitsar's humble hill.

Deeps unto deeps enraged call,
When thy dark spouts of waters fall,
  And dreadful tempest raves:
For all thy floods upon me burst,
And billows after billows thrust
  To swallow in their graves.

But yet by day the Lord will charge
His ready mercy to enlarge
  My soul, surprised with cares:
He gives my songs their argument;—
God of my life, I will present
  By night to thee my prayers:

And say, My God, my Rock, O why
Am I forgot, and mourning die,
By foes reduc'd to dust?
Their words like weapons pierce my bones;
While still they echo to my groans,
Where is the Lord thy trust?

My soul, why art thou so deprest!
O why so troubled in my breast!
Sunk underneath thy load!
With constant hope on God await:
For I his name shall celebrate;
My Saviour and my God.

PSALM LXVI.

Happy sons of Israel,
Who in pleasant Canaan dwell,
Fill the air with shouts of joy;
Shouts redoubled from the sky.
Sing the great Jehovah's praise;
Trophies to his glory raise;
Say, How wonderful thy deeds!
Lord, thy power all power exceeds!
Conquest on thy sword doth sit;
Trembling foes through fear submit.
Let the many-peopled earth,
All of high and humble birth,
Worship our eternal King;
Hymns unto his honour sing.
Come, and see what God hath wrought;
Terrible to human thought!

He the billows did divide;
Wall'd with waves on either side,
While we passed safe and dry:
Then our soul were rapt with joy.
Endless his dominion;
All beholding from his throne.
Let not those who hate us most,
Let not the rebellious boast.
Bless the Lord; his praise be sung,
While an ear can hear a tongue.
He our feet establisheth;
He our souls redeems from death.
Lord, as silver purified,
Thou hast with affliction tried:
Thou hast driven into the net;
Burdens on our shoulders set:
Trod on by their horses' hooves;
Theirs, whom pity never moves.
We through fire, with flames embrac'd,
We through raging floods have pass'd:
Yet by thy conducting hand,
Brought into a wealthy land.
I will to thy house repair;
Worship, and thy power declare:
Offerings on thy altar lay;
All my vows devoutly pay,
Utter'd with my heart and tongue,
When oppress'd with powerful wrong.
Fatlings I will sacrifice;
Incense in perfume shall rise;
Bullocks, shaggy goats, and rams
Offered up in sacred flames.
You, who great Jehovah fear,
Come, O come, you bless'd, and hear

What for me the Lord hath wrought,
Then, when near to ruin brought.
Fervently to him I cried;
I his goodness magnified.
If I vices should affect,
Would not he my prayers reject?
But the Lord my prayers hath heard,
Which my tongue with tears preferr'd.
Source of mercy, be thou blest,
That hast granted my request.

PSALM LXXXVIII.

My Saviour! both by night and day
To thee I pray.
O let my cries transcend the spheres,
And pierce thy ears!
Lest sorrow stop my fainting breath;
Now near the jaws of greedy death.

My light extinguish'd, numbered
Among the dead;
Like men in battle slain; the womb
Of earth their tomb:
Forgotten, as if never known;
By thy tempestuous wrath o'erthrown.

By thee lodg'd in the lowest deeps,
Where horror keeps;
In dungeons, where no sun displays
His cheerful rays.
Crush'd by thy wrath; on me thy waves
Rush, like so many rolling graves.

My old familiars, now my foes,
Deride my woes.
My house becomes my gaol; where I
In fetters lie.
Blind with my tears, with crying hoarse;
Hands rais'd in vain; a walking corse.

Wilt thou to those thy wonders show,
Who sleep below?
The dead from their cold mansions raise,
To sing thy praise?
Shall mercy find us in the grave?
Or wilt thou in destruction save?

Wilt thou thy wonders bring to light,
In death's long night?
Or shall thy justice there be shown,
Where none are known?
I have, and still to thee will pray;
Before the sun restore the day.

O, why hast thou withdrawn thy grace,
And hid thy face
From me, who from my infancy
But daily die?
Whilst I thy terrors undergo;
Distracted by these storms of woe.

Thy anger, like a gulf devours
My trembling powers:
With troops of terrors circled round;
In sorrow drown'd;
Depriv'd of those that lov'd me most;
To all in dark oblivion lost.

PSALM XCII.

THOU, who art enthron'd above;
Thou, by whom we live and move;
O how sweet, how excellent,
Is't with tongue and heart's consent,
Thankful hearts, and joyful tongues,
To renown thy name in songs!
When the morning paints the skies,
When the sparkling stars arise;
Thy high favours to rehearse,
Thy firm faith, in grateful verse.
Take the lute and violin;
Let the solemn harp begin;
Instruments strung with ten strings;
While the silver cymbal rings.
From thy works my joy *proceeds:*
How I triumph in thy deeds!
Who thy wonders can express!
All thy thoughts are *fathomless;*
Hid from men in knowledge blind;
Hid from fools to vice inclined.
Who that tyrant sin obey,
Though they spring like flowers in May,
Parch'd with heat, and nipp'd with frost,
Soon shall fade, for ever lost.
Lord, thou art most great, most high;
Such from all eternity.
Perish shall thy enemies,
Rebels that against thee rise.
All, who in their sins delight,
Shall be scatter'd by thy might.

But thou shalt exalt my horn,
Like a youthful unicorn;
Fresh and fragrant odours shed
On thy crowned prophet's head.
I shall see my foes' defeat,
Shortly hear of their retreat:
But the just like palms shall flourish,
Which the plains of Judah nourish:
Like tall cedars mounted on
Cloud-ascending Lebanon,
Plants set in thy court, below
Spread their roots, and upwards grow;
Fruit in their old age shall bring;
Ever fat and flourishing.
This God's justice celebrates;
He, my Rock, injustice hates.

PSALM C.

All from the sun's uprise,
Unto his setting rays,
Resound in jubilees
The great Jehovah's praise.
Him serve alone;
In triumph bring
Your gifts, and sing
Before his throne.

Man drew from man his birth,
But God his noble frame
Built of the ruddy earth,
Fill'd with celestial flame.

His sons we are;
Sheep by him led,
Preserv'd and fed
With tender care.

O, to his portals press
In your divine resorts:
With thanks his power profess,
And praise him in his courts.
How good! how pure!
His mercies last:
His promise past
For ever sure.

PSALM CXXXVII.

As on Euphrates' shady banks we lay,
And there, O Sion, to thy ashes pay
Our funeral tears; our silent harps, unstrung,
And unregarded, on the willows hung.
Lo, they who had thy desolation wrought,
And captived Judah unto Babel brought,
Deride the tears which from our sorrows spring;
And say in scorn, A song of Sion sing.
Shall we profane our harps at their command?
Or holy hymns sing in a foreign land?
O Solyma! thou that art now become
A heap of stones, and to thyself a tomb!
When I forget thee, my dear mother, let
My fingers their melodious skill forget:
When I a joy disjoined from thine receive,
Then may my tongue unto my palate cleave.

Remember Edom, Lord; their cruel pride,
Who in the sack of wretched Salem cried,
Down with their buildings; rase them to the ground,
Nor let one stone be on another found.
Thou Babylon, whose towers now touch the sky,
That shortly shalt as low in ruins lie;
O happy! O thrice happy they, who shall
With equal cruelty revenge our fall!
That dash thy children's brains against the stones
And without pity hear their dying groans.

DAVID'S LAMENTATION OVER SAUL AND JONATHAN.—2 SAMUEL. I.

THY beauty, Israel, is fled,
Sunk to the dead.
How are the valiant fall'n! the slain
Thy mountains stain.
O let it not in Gath be known;
Nor in the streets of Ascalon!

Lest that sad story should excite
Their dire delight:
Lest in the torrent of our woe
Their pleasure flow:
Lest their triumphant daughters ring
Their cymbals, and curs'd Pæans sing.

You hills of Gilboa, never may
You offerings pay;
No morning dew, nor fruitful showers
Clothe you with flowers:

Saul, and his arms, there made a spoil;
As if untouch'd with sacred oil.

The bow of noble Jonathan
Great battles won:
His arrows on the mighty fed,
With slaughter red.
Saul never raised his arm in vain;
His sword still glutted with the slain.

How lovely! O how pleasant! when
They liv'd with men!
Than eagles swifter; stronger far
Than lions are:
Whom love in life so strongly tied,
The stroke of death could not divide.

Sad Israel's daughters, weep for Saul;
Lament his fall:
Who fed you with the earth's increase,
And crown'd with peace:
With robes of Tyrian purple deck'd,
And gems which sparkling light reflect.

How are thy worthies by the sword
Of war devour'd!
O Jonathan, the better part
Of my torn heart!
The savage rocks have drunk thy blood:
My brother! O how kind! how good!

Thy love was great: O never more
To man man bore!
No woman, when most passionate,
Loved at that rate!

How are the mighty fall'n in fight!
They and their glory set in night!

HYMN, WRITTEN AT THE HOLY SEPULCHRE, IN JERUSALEM.

Saviour of mankind, Man, Emmanuel!
Who sinless died for sin: who vanquish'd hell;
The first-fruits of the grave; whose life did give
Light to our darkness; in whose death we live:—
Oh! strengthen thou my faith, convert my will,
That mine may thine obey; protect me still,
So that the latter death may not devour
My soul, seal'd with thy seal.—So, in the hour,
When thou (whose body sanctified this tomb,
Unjustly judged,) a glorious judge shall come
To judge the world with justice; by that sign
I may be known, and entertain'd for thine.

ON A REVIEW OF GOD'S MERCIES TO HIM IN HIS TRAVELS.

DEO OPT. MAX.

O Thou who all things hast of nothing made,
Whose hand the radiant firmament display'd,
With such an undiscerned swiftness hurl'd
About the steadfast centre of the world;
Against whose rapid course the restless sun,
And wand'ring flames in varied motions run,
Which heat, light, life infuse; time, night, and day
Distinguish; in our human bodies sway:

That hung'st the solid earth in fleeting air,
Vein'd with clear springs, which ambient seas repair:
In clouds the mountains wrap their hoary heads;
Luxurious vallies cloth'd with flowery meads:
Her trees yield fruit and shade; with liberal breasts,
All creatures she (their common mother) feasts.
Then man thy image mad'st; in dignity,
In knowledge, and in beauty like to thee;
Placed in a heaven on earth: without his toil
The ever-flourishing and fruitful soil
Unpurchas'd food produced: all creatures were
His subjects, serving more for love than fear.
He knew no Lord but Thee; but when he fell
From his obedience, all at once rebel,
And in his ruin exercise their might:
Concurring elements against him fight:
Troops of unknown diseases—sorrow, age,
And death assail him with successive rage.
Hell let forth all her furies: none so great,
As man to man, ambition, pride, deceit:
Wrong arm'd with power, lust, rapine, slaughter reign'd,
And flatter'd vice the name of virtue gain'd.
Then hills beneath the swelling waters stood,
And all the globe of earth was but one flood,
Yet could not cleanse their guilt: the following race
Worse than their fathers, and their sons more base:
Their God-like beauty lost—sin's wretched thrall;
No spark of their divine original
Left unextinguished; all enveloped
With darkness; in their bold transgressions dead;
When thou didst from the East a light display,
Which rendered to the world a clearer day;

Whose precepts from hell's jaws our steps withdraw,
And whose example was a living law:
Who purg'd us with his blood; the way prepar'd
To heaven, and those long-chain'd-up doors unbarr'd.
How infinite thy mercy! which exceeds
The world thou mad'st, as well as our misdeeds!
Which greater reverence than thy justice wins,
And still augments thy honour by our sins.
O who hath tasted of thy clemency
In greater measure, or more oft, than I!
My grateful verse thy goodness shall display,
O Thou who went'st along in all my way:
To where the morning with perfumed wings
From the high mountains of Panchæa springs,
To that new-found-out world, where sober night
Takes from the antipodes her silent flight;
To those dark seas, where horrid winter reigns,
And binds the stubborn floods in icy chains:
To Libyan wastes, whose thirst no showers assuage,
And where swoln Nilus cools the lion's rage.
Thy wonders in the deep have I beheld;
Yet all by those on Judah's hills excell'd:
There where the virgin's Son his doctrine taught,
His miracles, and our redemption wrought:
Where I, by Thee inspir'd, his praises sung;
And on his sepulchre my offering hung.
Which way soe'er I turn my face or feet,
I see thy glory, and thy mercy meet;
Met on the Thracian shores, when in the strife
Of frantic Simoans thou preserv'dst my life;
So when Arabian thieves belaid us round,
And whenby all abandon'd Thee I found.

That false Sidonian wolf, whose craft put on
A sheep's soft fleece, and me Bellerophon
To ruin by his cruel letter sent,
Thou didst by thy protecting hand prevent.
Thou sav'st me from the bloody massacres
Of faithless Indians; from their treacherous wars;
From raging fevers; from the sultry breath
Of tainted air, which cloy'd the jaws of death;
Preserved from swallowing seas, when tow'ring waves
Mixed with the clouds, and opened their deep graves;
From barbarous pirates ransom'd; by those taught
Successfully with Salian Moors we fought.
Then brought'st me home in safety; that this earth
Might bury me, which fed me from my birth:
Blest with a healthful age; a quiet mind,
Content with little; to this work designed;
Which I at length have finished by thy aid,
And now my vows have at thy altar paid.

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

BORN 1584; DIED 1650.

THE family of Fletcher was rendered illustrious in the literary history of the 17th century, by a constellation of poetic power. Dr. Giles Fletcher, an accomplished scholar, and himself, as Wood the antiquary says, "an excellent poet," left two sons, Phineas and Giles, both of whom deserve an eminent place among our early English classics. John Fletcher, the dramatic writer, the associate of Beaumont, was their cousin. With reason, therefore, might the writer of a copy of verses, prefixed to the works of Phineas Fletcher, say,

—— "Thy very name's a poet."

The principal composition of this author is "The Purple Island," a poem in twelve cantos, containing an allegorical description of the body and soul of man—a subject which no degree of skill in the poet could render agreeable as a whole to modern readers. It abounds, however, with passages of powerful description and great beauty both of thought and style.

PHINEAS FLETCHER.

THE INSTABILITY OF HUMAN GREATNESS.[1]

Fond man, that looks on earth for happiness,
And here long seeks what here is never found!
For all our good we hold from heav'n by lease,
With many forfeits and conditions bound;
Nor can we pay the fine, and rentage due:
Though now but writ, and seal'd, and giv'n anew,
Yet daily we it break, then daily must renew.

Why shouldst thou here look for perpetual good,
At ev'ry loss 'gainst heav'n's face repining?
Do but behold where glorious cities stood,
With gilded tops and silver turrets shining;
There now the hart fearless of greyhound feeds,
And loving pelican in safety breeds:
There screeching satyrs fill the people's empty stedes.[2]

[1] This and the next extract are from "The Purple Island."
[2] Steads, i. e. places.

Where is the Assyrian lion's golden hide,
That all the east once grasp'd in lordly paw?
Where that great Persian bear, whose swelling pride
The lion's self tore out with rav'nous jaw?
Or he which 'twixt a lion and a pard,
Through all the world with nimble pinions far'd,
And to his greedy whelps his conquer'd kingdoms shar'd.

Hardly the place of such antiquity,
Or note of these great monarchies we find:
Only a fading verbal memory,
And empty name in writ is left behind:
But when this second life and glory fades,
And sinks at length in time's obscurer shades,
A second fall succeeds, and double death invades.

That monstrous beast, which nurs'd in Tiber's fen,
Did all the world with hideous shape affray;
That filled with costly spoil his gaping den,
And trod down all the rest to dust and clay;
His batt'ring horns, pull'd out by civil hands,
And iron teeth lie scatter'd on the sands;
Back'd, bridled by a monk, with sev'n heads yoked stands.

And that black vulture,[1] which with dreadful wing
O'ershadows half the earth, whose dismal sight
Frighten'd the muses from their native spring,
Already stoops, and flags with weary flight:
Who then shall look for happiness beneath?
Where each new day proclaims, chance, change, and death.
And life itself's as fleet as is the air we breathe.

[1] The Turk.

THE MARRIAGE OF CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.[1]

THE fair Eclecta,[2] who with widow'd brow,
Her absent Lord long mourn'd in sad array,
Now silken linen[3] cloth'd like frozen snow,
Whose silver spanglets sparkle 'gainst the day:
This shining robe her Lord himself had wrought,
While he her love with hundred presents sought,
And it with many a wound, and many a torment bought!

And thus array'd, her heav'nly beauties shin'd
(Drawing their beams from his most glorious face)
Like to a precious jasper,[4] pure refin'd,
Which with a crystal mix'd, much mends his grace:
The golden stars a garland fair did frame
To crown her locks; the sun lay hid for shame,
And yielded all his beams to her more glorious flame.

Ah! who that flame can tell? Ah! who can see?
Enough is me with silence to admire;
While bolder joy, and humble majesty
In either cheek had kindled graceful fire:

[1] The contest between the good and evil qualities and affections having been concluded by the interposition of the Son of God, the poem ends with the stanzas which follow.
[2] The church. [3] Rev. xix. 8. [4] Ibid. xxi. 11.

Long silent stood she, while her former fears
And griefs run all away in sliding tears;
That like a wat'ry sun her gladsome face appears.

At length when joys had left her closer heart,
To seat themselves upon her thankful tongue;
First in her eyes they sudden flashes dart,
Then forth i' the music of her voice they throng;
"My hope, my love, my joy, my life, my bliss,
(Whom to enjoy is heav'n, but hell to miss,)
What are the world's false joys, what heav'n's true joys to this?

"Ah, dearest Lord! does my rapt soul behold thee?
Am I awake, and sure I do not dream?
Do these thrice blessed arms again infold thee?
Too much delight makes true things feigned seem.
Thee, thee I see; thou, thou thus folded art:
For deep thy stamp is printed in my heart,
And thousand ne'er-felt joys stream in each melting part."

Thus with glad sorrow did she sweetly plain her,
Upon his neck a welcome load depending;
While he with equal joy did entertain her,
Herself, her champions, highly all commending:
So all in triumph to his palace went;
Whose work in narrow words may not be pent;
For boundless thought is less than is that glorious tent.

There sweet delights, which know nor end nor measure;
No chance is there, nor eating times succeeding:
No wasteful spending can impair their treasure;

Pleasure full grown, yet ever freshly breeding:
Fulness of sweets excludes not more receiving:
The soul still big with joy, yet still conceiving;
Beyond slow tongue's report, beyond quick thought's perceiving.

There are they gone; there will they ever bide;
Swimming in waves of joy, and heav'nly loving:
He still a bridegroom, she a gladsome bride;
Their hearts in love, like spheres still constant moving:
No change, no grief, no age can them befall:
Their bridal bed is in that heav'nly hall,
Where all days are but one, and only one is all.

And as in state they thus in triumph ride,
The boys and damsels their just praises chant;
The boys the bridegroom sing, the maids the bride,
While all the hills glad hymens loudly vaunt:
Heav'n's winged hosts, greeting this glorious spring,
Attune their higher notes, and hymens sing:
Each thought to pass, and each did pass thought's loftiest wing.

Upon his lightning brow love proudly sitting
Flames out in pow'r, shines out in majesty;
There all his lofty spoils and trophies fitting;
Displays the marks of highest Deity:
There full of strength in lordly arms he stands,
And every heart, and every soul commands:
No heart, no soul, his strength and lordly pow'r withstands.

Upon her forehead thousand cheerful graces,
Seated on thrones of spotless ivory;
There gentle love his armed hand unbraces,
His bow unbent disclaims all tyranny;
There by his play a thousand souls beguiles,
Persuading more by simple modest smiles,
Than ever he could force by arms, or crafty wiles.

Upon her cheek doth Beauty's self implant
The freshest garden of her choicest flow'rs;
On which if Envy might but glance ascant,
Her eyes would swell, and burst, and melt in show'rs:
Thrice fairer both than ever fairest ey'd:
Heav'n never such a bridegroom yet descried;
Nor ever earth so fair, so undefil'd a bride.

Full of his Father shines his glorious face,
As far the sun surpassing in his light,
As doth the sun the earth with flaming blaze:
Sweet influence streams from his quick'ning sight:
His beams from nought did all this All display;
And when to less than nought they fell away,
He soon restor'd again by his new orient ray.

All heav'n shines forth in her sweet face's frame:
Her seeing stars (which we miscall bright eyes)
More bright than is the morning's brightest flame,
More fruitful than the May-time geminies:
These, back restore the timely summer's fire;
Those, springing thoughts in winter hearts inspire,
Inspiriting dead souls, and quick'ning warm desire.

These two fair suns in heav'nly spheres are plac'd,
Where in the centre, joy triumphing sits:
Thus in all high perfections fully grac'd,
Her mid-day bliss no future night admits;
But in the mirrors of her spouse's eyes
Her fairest self she dresses; there where lies
All sweets, a glorious beauty to imparadise.

His locks like raven's plumes, or shining jet,
Fall down in curls along his ivory neck;
Within their circlets hundred graces set,
And with love-knots their comely hangings deck:
His mighty shoulders, like that giant swain,[1]
All heaven and earth, and all in both sustain;
Yet knows no weariness, nor feels oppressing pain.

Her amber hair like to the sunny ray,
With gold enamels fair the silver white;
There heav'nly loves their pretty sportings play,
Firing their darts in that wide flaming light:
Her dainty neck, spread with that silver mould,
Where double beauty doth itself unfold,
In the own fair silver shrines, and borrow'd gold.

His breast a rock of purest alabaster,
Where Love's self sailing, shipwreck'd often sitteth.
Her's a twin-rock, unknown, but to th' ship-master,
Which harbours him alone, all other splitteth.
Where better could her love than here have nested?
Or he his thoughts than here more sweetly feasted?
Then both their love and thoughts in each are ever rested.

[1] Atlas.

Run now you shepherd-swains; ah! run you thither,
Where this fair bridegroom leads the blessed way:
And haste, you lovely maids, haste you together
With this sweet bride, while yet the sun-shine day
Guides your blind steps; while yet loud summons call,
That every wood and hill resounds withal,
Come Hymen, Hymen come, drest in thy golden pall.

The sounding echo back the music flung,
While heavenly spheres unto the voices play'd.
But lo! the day is ended with my song,
And sporting bathes with that fair ocean maid:
Stoop now thy wing, my muse, now stoop thee low:
Hence may'st thou freely play, and rest thee now;
While here I hang my pipe upon the willow bough.

THE POOR MAN TO THE SCORNFUL RICH MAN.

If well thou viewst us, with no squinted eye,
No partial judgment, thou wilt quickly rate
Thy wealth no richer than my poverty,
My want no poorer than thy rich estate:
Our ends and births alike; in this, as I,
Poor thou wert born, and poor again shalt die.

My little fills my little-wishing mind;
Thou, having more than much, yet seekest more:
Who seeks, still wishes what he seeks to find;
Who wishes, wants; and whoso wants, is poor:
Then this must follow of necessity—
Poor are thy riches, rich my poverty.

Though still thou get'st, yet is thy want not spent,
But, as thy wealth, so grows thy wealthy itch;
But with my little I have much content—
Content hath all; and who hath all, is rich:
Then this in reason thou must needs confess—
If I have little, yet that thou hast less.

Whatever man possesses, God hath lent,
And to his audit liable is, ever,
To reckon how, and when, and where he spent;
Then this thou bragg'st—thou art a great receiver:
Little my debt, when little is my store—
The more thou hast, thy debt still grows the more.

But seeing, God himself descended down
To enrich the poor by his rich poverty;
His meat, his house, his grave were not his own,
Yet all is his from all eternity:
Let me be like my Head, whom I adore:
Be thou great, wealthy—I still base and poor.

MISERY AND HAPPINESS.

Most wretched soul, that, here carousing pleasure,
With all his heaven on earth; and, ne'er distress'd,

Enjoys those fond delights without all measure,
And freely living thus, is thus deceas'd!
Ah, greatest curse, so to be ever bless'd!
For where to live is heaven, 'tis hell to die:
Ah, wretch! that here begins hell's misery!

Most blessed soul, that, lifted up with wings
Of faith and love, leaves this base habitation,
And scorning sluggish earth, to heaven upsprings;
On earth, yet still in heaven by meditation;
With the soul's eyes foreseeing the heavenly station!
Then 'gins his life, when he's of life bereaven,
Ah, blessed soul! that here begins his heaven!

PSALM XLII. METAPHRASED.

Look, as an hart with sweat and blood embrued,
Chas'd, and emboss'd, thirsts in the soil to be:
So my poor soul, with eager foes pursued,
Looks, longs, O Lord!—pines, pants, and faints for thee:
When, O my God! when shall I come in place
To see thy light, and view thy glorious face?

I dine and sup with sighs, with groans and tears,
While all my foes mine ears with taunting load—
"Who now thy cries, who now thy prayer hears?
Where is (say they) where is thy boasted God?"
My molten heart, deep plung'd in sad despairs,
Runs forth to thee in streams of tears and prayers.

With grief I think on those sweet now-past days,
When to thy house my troops with joy I led:
We sang, we danc'd, we chanted sacred lays—
No men so haste to wine, no bride to bed.
Why droop'st, my soul? why faint'st thou in my breast?
Wait still with praise: his presence is thy rest.

My famish'd soul, driv'n from thy sweetest word,
(From Hermon hill, and Jordan's swelling brook,)
To thee laments, sighs deep to thee, O Lord!
To thee sends back her hungry, longing look:
Floods of thy wrath breed floods of grief and fears,
And floods of grief breed floods of plaints and tears.

His early light with morn these clouds shall clear,
These dreary clouds, and storms of sad despairs,
Sure am I in the night his songs to hear,
Sweet songs of joy, as well as he my prayers:
I'll say "My God, why slight'st thou my distress,
While all my foes my weary soul oppress?

"My cruel foes both thou and me upbraid;
They cut my heart, they vaunt that bitter word—
'Where is thy trust? Where is thy hope?' they said;
'Where is thy God? Where is thy boasted Lord?'"
Why droop'st, my soul? Why faint'st thou in my breast?
Wait still with praise: his presence is thy rest.

HYMN.

Drop, drop slow tears,
And bathe those beauteous feet,
Which brought from heaven
The news and prince of peace.
Cease not, wet eyes,
His mercies to entreat,
To cry for vengeance
Sin doth never cease.
In your deep floods
Drown all my faults and fears;
Nor let his eye
See sin, but through my tears.

He against whom, wicked, unjust impure;—
Then might he sinful live, and die secure,
Or trial might escape, or trial might endure.

" The judge might partial be, and overprayed;
The place appeal'd from, in whose courts he sues;
The fault excus'd, or punishment delay'd,
The parties self-accus'd, that did accuse;
Angels for pardon might their prayers use:
But now no star can shine, no hope be got.
Most wretched creature, if he knew his lot,—
And yet more wretched far, because he knows it not.

" What should I tell how barren earth is grown,
All for to starve her children? didst not thou
Water with heav'nly show'rs her womb unsown,
And drop down clouds of flow'rs—didst not thou bow
Thine easy ear unto the ploughman's vow—
Long might he look, and look, and long in vain
Might load his harvest in an empty wain,
And beat the woods, to find the poor oak's hungry grain.

" The swelling sea seeths in his angry waves,
And smites the earth, that dares the traitors nourish;
Yet oft his thunder their light cork outbraves,
Mowing the mountains, on whose temples flourish
Whole woods of garlands; and, their pride to cherish,
Plough through the sea's green fields, and nets display
To catch the flying winds, and steal away,
Coz'ning the greedy sea, pris'ning their nimble prey.

"How often have I seen the waving pine,
Toss'd on a watery mountain, knock his head
At heav'n's too patient gates, and with salt brine
Quench the moon's burning horns; and safely fled
From heav'n's revenge, her passengers, all dead
With stiff astonishment, tumble to hell?
How oft the sea all earth would overswell,
Did not thy sandy girdle bind the mighty well?

"Would not the air be filled with streams of death,
To poison the quick rivers of their blood,
Did not thy winds fan, with their panting breath,
The flitting region? would not the hasty flood
Empty itself into the sea's wide wood,
Didst thou not lead it wand'ring from his way,
To give men drink, and make his waters stray,
To fresh the flow'ry meadows, through whose fields they play?

"Who makes the sources of the silver fountains
From the flint's mouth, and rocky valleys slide,
Thick'ning the airy bowels of the mountains?
Who hath the wild herds of the forest tied
In their cold dens, making them hungry bide
Till man to rest be laid? can beastly he,
That should have most sense, only senseless be,
And all things else, beside himself, so awful see?

"Were he not wilder than the savage beast,
Prouder than haughty hills, harder than rocks,
Colder than fountains, from their springs releas'd,
Lighter than air, blinder than senseless stocks,
More changing than the river's curling locks,—

If reason would not, sense would soon reprove
him,
And unto shame, if not to sorrow, move him,
To see cold floods, wild beasts, dull stocks, hard
stones outlove him.

" Under the weight of sin the earth did fall,
And swallow'd Dathan; and the raging wind,
And stormy sea, and gaping whale, did call
For Jonah; and the air did bullets find,
And shot from heav'n a stony shower, to grind
The five proud kings, that for their idols fought;
The sun itself stood still to fight it out,
And fire from heav'n flew down, when sin to
heav'n did shout.

" Should any to himself for safety fly?
The way to save himself, if any were,
Were to fly from himself: should he rely
Upon the promise of his wife? but there,
What can he see, but that he most may fear,
A syren, sweet to death? upon his friends?
Who that he needs, or that he hath not, lends;
Or wanting aid himself, aid to another sends?

" His strength? but dust: his pleasure? cause of
pain:
His hope? false courtier: youth or beauty? brittle:
Entreaty? fond: repentance? late and vain:
Just recompense? the world were all too little:
Thy love? he hath no title to a tittle:
Hell's force? in vain her furies hell shall gather:
His servants, kinsmen, or his children rather?
His child, if good, shall judge; if bad, shall curse
his father.

"His life? that brings him to his end, and leaves
him:
His end? that leaves him to begin his woe:
His goods? what good in that, that so deceives him?
His gods of wood? their feet, alas! are slow
To go to help, that must be help'd to go:
Honour? great worth? ah, little worth they be
Unto their owners: wit? that makes him see
He wanted wit, that thought he had it, wanting thee.

"The sea to drink him quick? that casts his dead:
Angels to spare? they punish: night to hide?
The world shall burn in light: the heav'ns to
spread
Their wings to save him? heav'n itself shall slide,
And roll away like melting stars, that glide
Along their oily threads: his mind pursues him:
His house to shroud, or hills to fall, and bruise
him?
As sergeants both attach, and witnesses accuse him.

"What need I urge—what they must needs confess—
Sentence on them, condemn'd by their own lust?
I crave no more, and thou canst give no less,
Than death to dead men, justice to unjust;
Shame to most shameful, and most shameless dust:
But if thy mercy needs will spare her friends,
Let mercy there begin, where justice ends.
'Tis cruel mercy, that the wrong from right de-
fends."

She ended, and the heav'nly hierarchies,
Burning in zeal, thickly imbranded[1] were;

[1] Mustered in arms.

Like to an army that alarum cries,
And ev'ry one shakes his terrific spear,
And the Almighty's self, as he would tear
The earth and her firm basis quite in sunder,
Flam'd all in just revenge, and mighty thunder;
Heav'n stole itself from earth by clouds that
moisten'd under.

As when the cheerful sun, elamping wide,
Glads all the world with his uprising ray,
And woos the widow'd earth afresh to pride,
And paints her bosom with the flow'ry May,
His silent sister steals him quite away,
Wrapp'd in a sable cloud, from mortal eyes,
The hasty stars at noon begin to rise,
And headlong to his early roost the sparrow flies:

But soon as he again dis shadow'd is,
Restoring the blind world his blemish'd sight,
As though another world were newly his,
The cozen'd birds busily take their flight,
And wonder at the shortness of the night;
So mercy once again herself displays,
Out from her sister's cloud, and open lays
Those sunshine looks, whose beams would dim a
thousand days.

How may a worm, that crawls along the dust,
Clamber the azure mountains, thrown so high,
And fetch from thence thy fair idea just,
That in those sunny courts doth hidden lie,
Cloth'd with such light, as blinds the angels' eye?
How may weak mortal ever hope to file
His unsmooth tongue, and his deprostrate style?
O, raise thou from his corse thy now entomb'd exile!

One touch would rouse me from my sluggish hearse,
One word would call me to my wished home,
One look would polish my afflicted verse,
One thought would steal my soul from her thick loam,
And force it wand'ring up to heav'n to come,
There to importune, and to beg apace
One happy favour of thy sacred grace,
To see—what though it lose her eyes?—to see thy face.

If any ask why roses please the sight?
Because their leaves upon thy cheeks do bow'r:
If any ask why lilies are so white?
Because their blossoms in thy hand do flow'r:
Or why sweet plants so grateful odours show'r?
It is because thy breath so like they be:
Or why the orient sun so bright we see?
What reason can we give, but from thine eyes, and thee?

Ros'd in all lively crimson are thy cheeks,
Where beauties indeflourishing abide,
And, as to pass his fellow either seeks,
Seems both do blush at one another's pride;
And on thine eyelids, waiting thee beside,
Ten thousand graces sit, and when they move
To earth their amorous belgards from above,
They fly from heav'n, and on their wings convey thy love.

All of discolour'd plumes their wings are made,
And with so wondrous art the quills are wrought,

That whensoe'er they cut the airy glade,
The wind into their hollow pipes is caught:
As seems the spheres with them they down have brought:
Like to the sev'nfold reed of Arcady,
Which Pan of Syrinx made, when she did fly
To Ladon sands, and at his sighs sung merrily.

As melting honey, dropping from the comb,
So still the words, that spring between thy lips.
Thy lips, where smiling sweetness keeps her home,
And heav'nly eloquence pure manna sips:
He that his pen but in that fountain dips,
How nimbly will the golden phrases fly,
And shed forth streams of choicest rhetory,
Welling celestial torrents out of poesy!

Like as the thirsty land, in summer's heat,
Calls to the clouds, and gapes at ev'ry shower,
As though her hungry clefts all heav'n would eat,
Which if high God into her bosom pour,
Though much refresh'd, yet more she could devour;
So hang the greedy ears of angels sweet,
And ev'ry breath a thousand Cupids meet,
Some flying in, some out, and all about her fleet.

Upon her breast delight doth softly sleep,
And of eternal joy is brought abed,
Those snowy mountlets, through which do creep
The milky rivers, that are inly bred
In silver cisterns, and themselves do shed
To weary travellers, in heat of day,
To quench their fiery thirst, and to allay
With dropping nectar floods, the fury of their way.

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If any wander, thou dost call him back;
If any be not forward, thou incit'st him;
Thou dost expect, if any should grow slack;
If any seem but willing, thou invit'st him;
Or if he do offend thee, thou acquitt'st him:
  Thou find'st the lost, and follow'st him that flies,
  Healing the sick, and quick'ning him that dies,
Thou art the lame man's friendly staff, the blind
    man's eyes.

So fair thou art, that all would thee behold;
But none can thee behold, thou art so fair;
Pardon, O pardon then thy vassal bold,
That with poor shadows strives thee to compare,
And match the things, which he knows matchless
    are.
  Thou living mirror of celestial grace,
  How can frail colours portray out thy face,
Or paint in flesh thy beauty, in such semblance
    base?

Her upper garment was a silken lawn,
With needlework richly embroidered,
Which she herself with her own hand had drawn,
And all the world therein had portrayed,
With threads so fresh and lively coloured
  That seem'd the world she new created there,
  And the mistaken eye would rashly swear
The silken trees did grow, and the beasts living
    were.

Low at her feet the earth was cast alone,
(As though to kiss her foot it did aspire,
And gave itself for her to tread upon,)
With so unlike, and different attire,

That ev'ry one that saw it, did admire
What it might be, was of so various hue;
For to itself it oft so diverse grew,
That still it seem'd the same, and still it seem'd a new.

And here and there few men she scattered,
(That in their thought the world esteem but small,
And themselves great,) but she with one fine thread
So short, and small, and slender, wove them all,
That like a sort of busy ants, that crawl
About some molehill, so they wandered;
And round about the waving sea was shed:
But, for the silver sands, small pearls were sprinkled.

So curiously the underwork did creep,
And curling circlets so well shadow'd lay,
That afar off the waters seem'd to sleep;
But those that near the margin pearl did play,
Hoarsely enwaved were with hasty sway,
As though they meant to rock the gentle ear,
And hush the former that enslumber'd were:
And here a dang'rous rock the flying ships did fear.

High in the airy element there hung
Another cloudy sea, that did disdain
(As though his purer waves from heaven sprung)
To crawl on earth, as doth the sluggish main:
But it the earth would water with his rain,
That ebb'd and flow'd, as wind and season would,
And oft the sun would cleave the limber mould
To alabaster rocks, that in the liquid roll'd.

Beneath those sunny banks, a darker cloud,
Dropping with thicker dew, did melt apace,
And bent itself into a hollow shroud,
On which, if Mercy did but cast her face,
A thousand colours did the bow enchase,
That wonder was to see the silk distain'd
With the resplendence from her beauty gain'd,
And Iris paint her locks with beams so lively feign'd.

About her head a cyprus heav'n she wore,
Spread like a veil upheld with silver wire,
In which the stars so burnt in golden ore,
As seem'd the azure web was all on fire:
But hastily, to quench the sparkling ire,
A flood of milk came rolling up the shore,
That on his curded wave swift Argus bore,
And the immortal swan, that did her life deplore.

Yet strange it was so many stars to see,
Without a sun to give their tapers light:
Yet strange it was not, that it so should be;
For, where the sun centres himself by right,
Her face, and locks did flame, that at the sight
The heav'nly veil, that else should nimbly move,
Forgot his flight, and all incensed with love,
With wonder, and amazement, did her beauty prove.

Over her hung a canopy of state,
Not of rich tissue, nor of spangled gold,
But of a substance, though not animate,
Yet of a heav'nly and spiritual mould,
That only eyes of spirits might behold;

Such light as from main rocks of diamond,
Shooting their sparks at Phœbus, would rebound,
And little angels, holding hands, danc'd all around.

Seemed those little sprights, through nimbless bold,
The stately canopy bore on their wings,
But them itself, as pendants, did uphold,
Besides the crowns of many famous kings:
Among the rest, there David ever sings,
And now, with years grown young, renews his lays
Unto his golden harp, and ditties plays,
Psalming aloud in well-tun'd songs his Maker's praise.

Thou Self-Idea of all joys to come,
Whose love is such, would make the rudest speak,
Whose love is such, would make the wisest dumb,
O, when wilt thou thy too-long silence break,
And overcome the strong to save the weak!
If thou no weapons hast, thine eyes will wound
Th' Almighty's self, that now gaze on the ground,
As though some blessed object there did them impound.

Ah! miserable abject of disgrace,
What happiness is in thy misery?
I both must pity and envy thy case;
For she, that is the glory of the sky,
Leaves Heaven blind to fix on thee her eye.
Yet her (though Mercy's self esteems not small)
The world despis'd, they her Repentance call,
And she herself despises, and the world, and all.

Deeply, alas! empassioned she stood,
To see a flaming brand, toss'd up from hell,
Boiling her heart in her own lustful blood,
That oft for torment she would loudly yell;
Now she would sighing sit, and now she fell
Crouching upon the ground, in sackcloth truss'd;
Early and late she pray'd, and fast she must,
And all her hair hung full of ashes and of dust.

Of all most hated, yet hated most of all
Of her own self she was; disconsolate
(As though her flesh did but infuneral
Her buried ghost) she in an arbour sat
Of thorny briar, weeping her cursed state;
And her before a hasty river fled,
Which her blind eyes with faithful penance fed,
And, all about, the grass with tears hung down his head.

Her eyes, though blind abroad, at home kept fast,
Inwards they turn'd, and look'd into her head,
At which she often started, as aghast,
To see so fearful spectacles of dread;
And with one hand her breast she martyred,
Wounding her heart, the same to mortify;
The other a fair damsel held her by,
Which if but once let go, she sunk immediately.

But faith was quick, and nimble as the heav'n,
As if of love and life she all had been,
And though of present sight her sense were riv'n,
Yet she could see the things could not be seen:
Beyond the stars, as nothing were between,

She fixed her sight, disdaining things below:
Into the sea she could a mountain throw,
And make the sun to stand, and waters backwards flow.

Such when as Mercy her beheld from high,
In a dark valley, drown'd with her own tears,
One of her graces she sent hastily,
Smiling Irene,[1] that a garland wears
Of gilded olive, on her fairer hairs,
To crown the fainting soul's true sacrifice,
Whom when as sad Repentance coming spies,
The holy desperado wip'd her swollen eyes.

But Mercy felt a kind remorse to run
Through her soft veins, and therefore, hieing fast
To give an end to silence, thus begun:—
"Aye-honour'd Father, if no joy thou hast
But to reward desert, reward at last
The devil's voice, spoke with a serpent's tongue,
Fit to hiss out the words so deadly stung,
And let him die, death's bitter charms so sweetly sung.

"He was the father of that hopeless season,
That, to serve other gods, forgot their own,
The reason was, thou wast above their reason:
They would have any gods, rather than none,
A beastly serpent, or a senseless stone:
And these, as Justice hates, so I deplore;
But the upploughed heart, all rent and tore,
Though wounded by itself, I gladly would restore.

[1] Peace.

" He was but dust; why fear'd he not to fall?
And, being fall'n, how can he hope to live?
Cannot the hand destroy him, that made all?
Could he not take away, as well as give?
Should man deprave, and should not God deprive?
Was it not all the world's deceiving spirit,
(That, bladder'd up with pride of his own merit,
Fell in his rise,) that him of heav'n did disinherit?

" He was but dust: how could he stand before him?
And, being fall'n, why should he fear to die?
Cannot the hand that made him first, restore him?
Deprav'd of sin, should he deprived lie
Of grace? can he not hide infirmity
That gave him strength? unworthy the forsaking,
He is, whoever weighs, without mistaking,
Or Maker of the man, or manner of his making.

" Who shall thy temple incense any more,
Or at thy altar crown the sacrifice;
Or strew with idle flowers the hallowed floor?
Or what should prayer deck with herbs and spice
Her vials, breathing orisons of price?
If all must pay that which all cannot pay,
O first begin with me, and Mercy slay,
And thy thrice honoured Son, that now beneath doth stray.

" But if or he, or I, may live and speak,
And heaven can joy to see a sinner weep,
Oh let not Justice' iron sceptre break
A heart already broke; that low doth creep,
And with prone humblesse her feet's dust doth sweep.

Must all go by desert? is nothing free?
Ah! if but those that only worthy be,
None should thee ever see, none should thee ever see.

"What hath man done, that man shall not undo;
Since God to him is grown so near a kin?
Did his foe slay him? he shall slay his foe:
Hath he lost all? he all again shall win:
Is sin his master? he shall master sin.
Too hardy soul, with sin the field to try:
The only way to conquer, was to fly;
But thus long death hath lived, and now death's self shall die.

"He is a path, if any be misled;
He is a robe, if any naked be:
If any chance to hunger, he is bread;
If any be a bondman, he is free;
If any be but weak, how strong is he!
To dead men life he is, to sick men health;
To blind men sight, and to the needy wealth—
A pleasure without loss, a treasure without stealth.

"Who can forget—never to be forgot—
The time that all the world in slumber lies,
When, like the stars, the singing angels shot
To earth, and heaven awaked all his eyes,
To see another sun at midnight rise
On earth? Was never sight of pareil fame;
For God before man like himself did frame,
But God himself now like a mortal man became.

"A child he was, and had not learn'd to speak,
That with his word the world before did make;

" His mother's arms him bore, he was so weak,
That with one hand the vaults of heaven could
shake.
See how small room my infant Lord doth take,
Whom all the world is not enough to hold!
Who of his years, or of his age, hath told?
Never such age so young, never a child so old.

" And yet but newly he was infanted,
And yet already he was sought to die;
Yet scarcely born, already banished;
Not able yet to go, and forc'd to fly:
But scarcely fled away, when, by and by,
The tyrant's sword with blood is all defiled,
And Rachel, for her sons, with fury wild,
Cries, O thou cruel king, and, O my sweetest child!

" Egypt his nurse became, where Nilus springs,
Who straight to entertain the rising sun,
The hasty harvest in his bosom brings;
But now for drought the fields were all undone,
And now with waters all is overrun:
So fast the Cynthian mountains pour'd their snow,
When once they felt the sun so near them glow,
That Nilus Egypt lost, and to a sea did grow.

" The angels carol'd loud their song of peace;
The cursed oracles were stricken dumb;
To see their Shepherd the poor shepherds press;
To see their King the kingly sophies come;
And, them to guide unto his master's home,
A star comes dancing up the orient,
That springs for joy over the starry tent,
Where gold, to make their prince a crown, they all
present.

"Young John, glad child! before he could be born,
Leap'd in the womb, his joy to prophecy;
Old Anna, though with age all spent and worn,
Proclaims her Saviour to posterity,
And Simeon fast his dying notes doth ply.
Oh, how the blessed souls about him trace!
It is the Sire of heaven thou dost embrace:
Sing, Simeon, sing—sing, Simeon, sing apace!"

With that the mighty thunder dropt away
From God's unwary arm, now milder grown,
And melted into tears; as if to pray
For pardon, and for pity, it had known,
That should have been for sacred vengeance thrown:
There too the armies angelic devow'd
Their former rage, and all to Mercy bow'd;
Their broken weapons at her feet they gladly strow'd.

"Bring, bring, ye Graces, all your silver flaskets,
Painted with every choicest flower that grows,
That I may soon unflower your fragrant baskets,
To strow the fields with odours where he goes,
Let whatsoe'er he treads on be a rose."
So down she let her eyelids fall, to shine
Upon the rivers of bright Palestine,
Whose woods drop honey, and her rivers skip with wine.

PART II.

CHRIST'S VICTORY ON EARTH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Christ brought into the place of combat, the wilderness, among the wild beasts, Mark i. 13.—Described by his proper attribute, the Mercy of God—whom the creatures cannot but adore—by his unity with the Godhead—The beauty of his body, Cant. v. 11; Psal. xlv. 2; Gen. xlix. 12; Cant. v. 10; and Isa. liii. 2.—By preparing himself to the combat with his adversary, that seemed what he was not—some devout Essene—closely tempting him to despair of God's providence, and provide for himself—But was what he seemeth not, Satan, and would fain have led him, 1st. to Desperation; charactered by his place, countenance, apparel, horrible apparitions, &c.—2d. To Presumption; charactered by her place, attendants, &c.—and by her temptation, to Vain-glory: poetically described from the place where her court stood, a garden;—from her court and courtiers;—pleasure in drinking; in luxury; avarice; ambitious honour; from her throne, and from her temptation.—The effect of this victory in Satan; the angels; the creatures.

THERE, all alone, she spied, alas the while!
In shady darkness, a poor desolate,
That now had measur'd many a weary mile,
Through a waste desert, whither heav'nly fate
And his own will him brought; he praying sate,
And him to prey, as he to pray began,
The citizens of the wild forest ran,
And all with open throat would swallow whole the man.

Soon did the lady to her graces cry,
And on their wings herself did nimbly strow,

After her coach a thousand loves did fly,
So down into the wilderness they throw;
Where she, and all her train that with her flow
Thorough the airy wave, with sails so gay,
Sinking into his breast that weary lay,
Made shipwreck of themselves, and vanish'd quite away.

Seemed that man had them devoured all,
Whom to devour the beasts had made pretence;
But him their savage thirst did naught appal,
Though weapons none he had for his defence:
What arms for Innocence, but innocence?
For when they saw their Lord's bright cognizance
Shine in his face, soon did they disadvance,
And some unto him kneel, and some about him dance.

Down fell the lordly lion's angry mood,
And he himself fell down in congees low,
Bidding him welcome to his wasteful wood;
Sometime he kiss'd the grass where he did go,
And, as to wash his feet he well did know,
With fawning tongue he lick'd away the dust;
And ev'ry one would nearest to him thrust,
And ev'ry one, with new, forgot his former lust.

Unmindful of himself, to mind his Lord,
The lamb stood gazing by the tiger's side,
As though between them they had made accord,—
And on the lion's back the goat did ride,
Forgetful of the roughness of the hide:

If he stood still, their eyes upon him baited,
If walk'd, they all in order on him waited,
And when he slept, they as his watch themselves
conceited.

Wonder doth call me up to see—(O no,
I cannot see, and therefore sink in wonder)
The man, that shines as bright as God,—not so,
For God he is himself, that close lies under
That man,—so close, that no time can dissunder
That band; yet not so close, but from him break
Such beams, as mortal eyes are all too weak
Such sight to see,—or it, if they should see, to
speak.

Upon a grassy hillock he was laid,
With woody primroses befreckled,
Over his head the wanton shadows play'd
Of a wild olive, that her boughs so spread,
As with her leaves she seemed to crown his head,
And her green arms to embrace the Prince of
Peace;
The Sun so near, needs must the winter cease—
The Sun so near, another spring seem'd to in-
crease.

His hair was black, and in small curls did twine,
As though it were the shadow of some light;
And, underneath, his face, as day, did shine—
But sure the day shined not half so bright,
Nor the sun's shadow made so dark a night.
Under his lovely locks, her head to shroud,
Did meek Humility herself grow proud:—
Hither, to light their lamps, did all the graces
crowd.

One of ten thousand souls I am, and more,
That of his eyes, and their sweet wounds, complain:
Sweet are the wounds of love—never so sore—
Ah! might he often slay me so again!
He never lives that thus is never slain.
What boots it watch? those eyes, for all my art,
Mine own eyes looking on, have stole my heart:
In them Love bends his bow, and dips his burning dart.

As when the sun, caught in an adverse cloud,
Flies 'cross the world, and there anew begets
The wat'ry picture of his beauty proud,
Throws all abroad his sparkling spangelets,
And the whole world in dire amazement sets,
To see two days abroad at once, and all
Doubt whether now he rise, or now he fall:
So flam'd the godly flesh, proud of his heav'nly thrall.

His cheeks as snowy apples sopp'd in wine,
Had their red roses quench'd with lilies white,
And like to garden strawberries did shine,
Wash'd in a bowl of milk, or rose-buds bright
Unbosoming their breasts against the light:
Here love-sick souls did eat, there drank, and made
Sweet-smelling posies, that could never fade,—
But worldly eyes him thought more like some living shade.

For laughter never look'd upon his brow,
Though in his face all smiling joys did bide;

No silken banners did about him flow,—
Fools make their fetters ensigns of their pride:
He was best cloth'd when naked was his side.
A Lamb he was, and woollen fleece he wore,
Wove with one thread; his feet low sandals wore;
But bared were his legs,—so went the times of yore.

As two white marble pillars that uphold
God's holy place, where he in glory sits,
And rise with goodly grace and courage bold,
To bear his temple on their ample jets,
Vein'd ev'ry where with azure rivulets,
Whom all the people on some holy morn,
With boughs and flow'ry garlands do adorn,—
Of such, though fairer far, this temple was upborne.

Twice had Diana bent her golden bow,
And shot from heav'n her silver shafts, to rouse
The sluggish savages, that den below,
And all the day in lazy covert drowse,
Since him the silent wilderness did house:
The heav'n his roof and arbour harbour was,
The ground his bed, and his moist pillow grass;
But fruit there none did grow, nor rivers none did pass.

At length an aged sire far off he saw
Come slowly footing; ev'ry step he guess'd,
One of his feet he from the grave did draw;
Three legs he had—the wooden was the best;
And all the way he went, he ever blest
With benedicities, and prayers store,
But the bad ground was blessed ne'er the more;
And all his head with snow of age was waxen hoar.

A good old hermit he might seem to be,
That for devotion had the world forsaken,
And now was travelling some saint to see,
Since to his beads he had himself betaken,
Where all his former sins he might awaken,
And them might wash away with dropping brine,
And alms, and fasts, and church's discipline;
And dead, might rest his bones under the holy shrine.

But when he nearer came, he louted low
With prone obeisance, and with curtsey kind,
That at his feet his head he seem'd to throw;—
What needs him now another saint to find?
Affections are the sails, and faith the wind,
That to this saint a thousand souls convey
Each hour: O happy pilgrims thither stray!
What caren they for beasts, or for the weary way!

Soon the old palmer his devotions sung,
Like pleasing anthems, modelled in time;
For well that aged sire could tip his tongue
With golden foil of eloquence, and lime,
And lick his rugged speech with phrases prime.
"Ah me! (quoth he) how many years have been,
Since these old eyes the sun of heav'n have seen!
Certes the Son of Heav'n they now behold I ween.

"Ah, might my humble cell so blessed be,
As Heav'n to welcome in its lowly roof,
And be the temple for thy Deity!
Lo, how my cottage worships thee aloof,
That underground hath hid his head, in proof

It doth adore thee with the ceiling low,—
Here honey, milk, and chesnuts wild do grow,
The boughs a bed of leaves upon thee shall bestow.

"But, oh! (he said, and therewith sigh'd full deep)
The heav'ns, alas! too envious are grown,
Because our fields thy presence from them keep;
For stones do grow where corn was lately sown:
(So stooping down, he gather'd up a stone:)
But thou with corn canst make this stone to ear.
What need we then the angry heav'ns to fear?
Let them us envy still, so we enjoy thee here."

Thus on they wand'red: but those holy weeds
A monstrous serpent, and no man did cover:
So under greenest herbs the adder feeds;
And round about that stinking corpse did hover
The dismal prince of gloomy night, and over
His ever-damned head the shadows err'd
Of thousand peccant ghosts, unseen, unheard,
And all the tyrant fears—and all the tyrant fear'd.

He was the son of blackest Acheron,
Where many frozen souls do chatt'ring lie,
And rul'd the burning waves of Phlegethon,
Where many more in flaming sulphur fry,
At once compell'd to live and forc'd to die;
Where nothing can be heard for the loud cry
Of "Oh!" and "Ah!" and "Out alas! that I
Or once again might live, or once at length might die!"

Ere long they came near to a baleful bow'r,
Much like the mouth of that infernal cave,
That gaping stood all comers to devour,

Dark, doleful, dreary—like a greedy grave,
That still for carrion carcasses doth crave:
The ground no herbs, but venomous, did bear,
Nor ragged trees did leaf, but ev'rywhere
Dead bones and skulls were cast, and bodies hanged were.

Upon the roof the bird of sorrow sat
Elonging joyful day with her sad note,
And through the shady air, the flutt'ring bat
Did wave her leather sails, and blindly float,
While with her wings the fatal screech-owl smote
The unbless'd house; there, on a craggy stone,
Celæno[1] hung, and made his direful moan,
And all about the murder'd ghosts did shriek and groan.

Like cloudy moonshine, in some shadowy grove,
Such was the light in which Despair did dwell;
But he himself with night for darkness strove.
His black uncombed locks dishevell'd fell
About his face, through which, as brands of hell,
Sunk in his skull, his staring eyes did glow,
That made him deadly look; their glimpse did show
Like cockatrice's eyes, that sparks of poison throw.

His clothes were ragged clouts, with thorns pinn'd fast;
And, as he musing lay, to stony fright
A thousand wild chimeras would him cast:
As when a fearful dream, in midst of night,
Skips to the brain, and fancies to the sight

[1] One of the harpies.—Æn. iii. 245.

Some winged fury, straight the hasty foot,
Eager to fly, cannot pluck up his root,
The voice dies in the tongue, and mouth gapes without boot.[1]

Now he would dream that he from heaven fell,
And then would snatch the air, afraid to fall;
And now he thought he sinking was to hell,
And then would grasp the earth; and now his stall
Him seemed hell, and then he out would crawl;
And ever, as he crept, would squint aside,
Lest him, perhaps, some fury had espied,
And then, alas! he should in chains for ever bide.

Therefore he softly shrunk, and stole away,
Nor ever durst to draw his breath for fear,
Till to the door he came, and there he lay
Panting for breath, as though he dying were;
And still he thought he felt their grapples tear
Him by the heels back to his ugly den:
Out fain he would have leap'd abroad, but then
The heav'n, as hell, he fear'd, that punish guilty men.

Within the gloomy hole of this pale wight
The serpent woo'd him with his charms to inn;
There he might bait the day, and rest the night;
But under that same bait a fearful grin
Was ready to entangle him in sin.
But he upon ambrosia daily fed,
That grew in Eden—thus he answered:
So both away were caught, and to the Temple fled.

[1] To no purpose.

Well knew our Saviour this the serpent was,
And the old serpent knew our Saviour well;
Never did any this in falsehood pass,
Never did any him in truth excel:
With him we fly to heav'n, from heav'n we fell
With him: but now they both together met
Upon the sacred pinnacles, that threat,
With their aspiring tops, Astræa's starry seat

Here did Presumption her pavilion spread,
Over the Temple, the bright stars among,
(Ah! that her foot should trample on the head
Of that most rev'rend place!) and a lewd throng
Of wanton boys sung her a pleasant song
Of love, long life, of mercy, and of grace;
And ev'ry one her dearly did embrace,
And she herself enamour'd was of her own face—

A painted face, belied with vermeil store,
Which light Euëlpis ev'ry day did trim,
That in one hand a gilded anchor wore,
Not fixed on the rock, but on the brim
Of the wide air, she let it loosely swim:
Her other hand a sprinkle carried,
And ever, when her lady wavered,
Court holy-water all upon her sprinkled.

Poor fool! she thought herself in wondrous price
With God, as if in paradise she were;
But, were she not in a fool's paradise,
She might have seen more reason to despair:
But him she, like some ghastly fiend, did fear;
And therefore, as that wretch hew'd out his cell
Under the bowels, in the heart of hell,
So she above the moon, amid the stars would dwell.

Her tent with sunny clouds was seal'd aloft,
And so exceeding shone with a false light,
That heav'n itself to her it seemed oft,
Heav'n without clouds to her deluded sight;
But clouds withouten heav'n it was aright;
And as her house was built, so did her brain
Build castles in the air, with idle pain,
But heart she never had in all her body vain.

Like as a ship, in which no balance lies,
Without a pilot, on the sleeping waves,
Fairly along with wind and water flies,
And painted masts with silken sails embraves,[1]
That Neptune's self the bragging vessel saves,
To laugh awhile at her so proud array;
Her waving streamers loosely she lets play,
And flagging colours shine as bright as smiling day:

But all so soon as Heav'n his brows doth bend,
She veils her banners, and pulls in her beams,
The empty bark the raging billows send
Up to the Olympic waves, and Argus seems
Again to ride upon our lower streams:
Right so Presumption did herself behave,
Tossed about with ev'ry stormy wave,
And in white lawn she went, most like an angel brave.

Gently our Saviour she began to shrive,[2]
Whether he were the Son of God, or no;
For any other she disdain'd to wive:
And if he were, she bid him fearless throw

[1] Adorns. [2] To question as a confessor.

Himself to ground; and therewithal did show
A flight of little angels, that did wait,
Upon their glitt'ring wings to launch him straight,
And longed on their backs to feel his glorious weight.

But when she saw her speech prevailed naught,
Herself she tumbled headlong to the floor:
But him the angels on their feathers caught,
And to an airy mountain nimbly bore,
Whose snowy shoulders, like some chalky shore,
Restless Olympus seem'd to rest upon,
With all his swimming globes: so both are gone,
The dragon with the Lamb—Ah! unmeet paragon!

All suddenly the hill his snow devours,
In lieu whereof a goodly garden grew;
As if the snow had melted into flow'rs,
Which their sweet breath in subtle vapours threw,
That all about perfumed spirits flew:
For whatsoe'er might aggravate the sense,
In all the world, or please the appetence,
Here it was poured out in lavish affluence.

Not lovely Ida might with this compare,
Though many streams his banks besilvered,
Though Xanthus with his golden sands he bare;
Nor Hybla, though his thyme, depastured,
As fast again with honey blossomed;
Nor Rhodope, nor Tempe's flow'ry plain:
Adonis' garden was to this but vain,
Though Plato on his beds a flood of praise did rain.

For in all these, some one thing most did grow,
But in this one grew all things else beside;
For sweet variety herself did throw
To ev'ry bank: here all the ground she dy'd
In lily white; there pinks eblazed wide,
And damask'd all the earth; and here she shed
Blue violets, and there came roses red;
And ev'ry sight the yielding sense as captive led.

The garden like a lady fair was cut,
That lay as if she slumber'd in delight,
And to the open skies her eyes did shut;
The azure fields of heav'n were 'sembled right
In a large round, set with the flow'rs of light:
The flow'rs-de-luce, and the round sparks of dew,
That hung upon their azure leaves, did shew
Like twinkling stars, that sparkle in the ev'ning blue.

Upon a hilly bank her head she cast,
On which the bower of Vain-delight was built;
White and red roses for her face were plac'd,
And for her tresses marigolds were spilt:
Them broadly she display'd, like flaming gilt,
Till in the ocean the glad day were drown'd;
Then up again her yellow locks she wound,
And with green fillets in their pretty cauls them bound.

What should I here depaint her lily hand,
Her veins of violets, her ermine breast,
Which there in orient colours living stand;
Or how her gown with silken leaves is dress'd;
Or how her watchman, armed with boughy crest,

A wall of prim hid in his bushes bears,
Shaking at ev'ry wind their leafy spears,
While she supinely sleeps, nor to be waked fears?

Over the hedge depends the graping elm,
Whose greener head, empurpuled in wine,
Seemed to wonder at his bloody helm,
And half suspect the bunches of the vine;
Lest they, perhaps, his wit should undermine.
For well he knew such fruit he never bore:
But her weak arms embraced him the more,
And with her ruby grapes laugh'd at her paramour.

Under the shadow of these drunken elms
A fountain rose * * *
* * *

The font of silver was, and so his show'rs
In silver fell, only the gilded bowls
(Like to a furnace, that the mineral pours)
Seem'd to have molten in their shining holes;
And on the water, like to burning coals,
On liquid silver, leaves of roses lay:
But when Panglory here did list to play,
Rose-water then it ran, and milk it rain'd, they say.

The roof thick clouds did paint, from which three boys
Three gaping mermaids with their ewers did feed,
Whose breasts let fall the stream, with sleepy noise,
To lions' mouths, from whence it leap'd with speed,
And in the rosy laver seem'd to bleed.

The naked boys unto the waters fall,
Their stony nightingales had taught to call,
When Zephyr breath'd into their watery enterall.

And all about, embayed in soft sleep,
A herd of charmed beasts aground were spread,
Which the fair witch in golden chains did keep,
And them in willing bondage fettered;
And turn'd to beasts,—so fabled Homer old,
That Circe, with her potion, charm'd in gold,
Us'd manly souls in beastly bodies to immould.

Through this false Eden, to his leman's bow'r,
(Whom thousand souls devoutly idolize)
Our first destroyer led our Saviour:
There in the lower room, in solemn wise,
They danc'd around, and pour'd their sacrifice
To plump Lyæus,[1] and, among the rest,
The jolly priest, in ivy garlands drest,
Chanted wild orgials, in honour of the feast.

Fly, fly, thou holy Child, that wanton room,
And thou, my chaster muse, those harlots shun,
And with him to a higher story come,
Where mounts of gold, and floods of silver run,
The while the owners, with their wealth undone,
Starve in their store, and in their plenty pine,
Tumbling themselves upon their heaps of mine,
Once men they liv'd, but now the men were dead,
Glutting their famish'd souls with the deceitful shine.

[1] Bacchus.

Ah! who was he such precious perils found?
How strongly nature did her treasures hide,
And threw upon him mountains of thick ground,
To dark their ory lustre! but quaint pride
Hath taught her sons to wound their mother's side,
And gauge the depth to search for flaming shells,
In whose bright bosom spumy Bacchus swells,
That neither heav'n nor earth henceforth in safety dwells.

O sacred hunger of the greedy eye,
Whose need hath end, but no end covetise;
Empty in fulness, rich in poverty,
That having all things, nothing can suffice,
How thou befanciest the men most wise!
The poor man would be rich, the rich man great,
The great man king, the king in God's own seat
Enthron'd, with mortal arm dares flames and thunder threat.

Therefore above the rest Ambition sate,
His court with glitt'ring pearl was all inwall'd,
And round about the wall, in chairs of state,
And most majestic splendour were install'd
A hundred kings, whose temples were impalled
In golden diadems, set here and there
With diamonds, and gemmed ev'rywhere,
And of their golden verges none desceptred were.

High over all Panglory's blazing throne,
In her bright turret, all of crystal wrought,

Like Phœbus' lamp, in midst of heaven, shone;
Whose starry top, with pride infernal fraught,
Self-arching columns to uphold were taught,
In which her image still reflected was
By the smooth crystal, that most like her glass,
In beauty and in frailty did all others pass.

A silver wand the sorceress did sway,
And, for a crown of gold, her hair she wore;
Only a garland of rose-buds did play
About her locks, and in her hand she bore
A hollow globe of glass, that long before
She full of emptiness had bladdered,
And all the world therein depictured,
Whose colours, like the rainbow, ever vanished.

Such wat'ry orbicles young boys do blow
Out from their soapy shells, and much admire
The swimming world, which tenderly they row
With easy breath till it be waved higher:
But if they chance but roughly once aspire,
The painted bubble instantly doth fall.
Here when he came, she 'gan for music call,
And sung this wooing song, to welcome him withal:—

"Love is the blossom where there blows
Every thing that lives or grows:
Love doth make the heav'ns to move,
And the sun doth burn in love:
Love the strong and weak doth yoke,
And makes the ivy climb the oak;
Under whose shadows lions wild,
Soften'd by love, grow tame and mild.

Love no med'cine can appease,
He burns the fishes in the seas;
Not all the skill his wounds can stench,
Not all the sea his fire can quench:
Love did make the bloody spear
Once a leafy coat to wear,
While in his leaves there shrouded lay
Sweet birds, for love, that sing and play:
And of all love's joyful flame,
I the bud and blossom am.
Only bend the knee to me,
Thy wooing shall thy winning be.

See, see the flowers that, below,
Now as fresh as morning blow;
And of all, the virgin rose,
That as bright Aurora shows:
How they all unleaved die,
Losing their virginity;
Like unto a summer-shade,
But now born, and now they fade.
Every thing doth pass away,
There is danger in delay:
Come, come gather then the rose,
Gather it, or it you lose.
All the sand of Tagus' shore
Into my bosom casts his ore:
All the valleys swimming corn
To my house is yearly borne:
Ev'ry grape of ev'ry vine
Is gladly bruis'd to make me wine,
While ten thousand kings, as proud,
To carry up my train have bow'd,
And a world of ladies send me
In my chambers to attend me:

All the stars in heav'n that shine,
And ten thousand more are mine.
Only bend thy knee to me,
Thy wooing shall thy winning be."

Thus sought the dire enchantress in his mind
Her guileful bait to have embosomed;
But he her charms dispersed into wind,
And her of insolence admonished,
And all her optic glasses shattered.
So with her sire to hell she took her flight,
(The starting air flew from the damned spright,)
Where deeply both aggriev'd, plunged themselves in night.

But to their Lord, now musing in his thought,
A heav'nly volley of light angels flew,
And from his Father him a banquet brought,
Through the fine element; for well they knew,
After his Lenten fast, he hungry grew;
And, as he fed, the holy quires combine
To sing a hymn of the celestial Trine;
All thought to pass, and each was past all thought divine.

The birds sweet notes, to sonnet out their joys,
Attemper'd to the lays angelical;
And to the birds the winds attune their noise;
And to the winds the waters hoarsely call,
And Echo back again revoiced all;
That the whole valley rung with victory.
But now our Lord to rest doth homeward fly:
See how the night comes stealing from the mountains high!

PART III.

CHRIST'S TRIUMPH OVER DEATH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Christ's triumph over death on the cross, expressed, 1st, In general, by his joy to undergo it; singing before he went to the garden, Matt. xxvi. 30—by his grief in the undergoing it—by the obscure fables of the Gentiles typing it—by the cause of it in him, his love—by the effect it should have in us—by the instrument, the cursed tree—2d, Expressed in particular: 1st, By his fore-passion in the garden—by his passion itself amplified; 1st, From the general causes, parts, and effects of it—2d, From the particular causes, parts, and effects of it—in heaven—in the heavenly spirits—in the creatures sub-celestial—in the wicked Jews—in Judas—in the blessed saints, Joseph of Arimathea, &c.

So down the silver streams of Eridan,
On either side bank'd with a lily wall,
Whiter than both rides the triumphant swan,
And sings his dirge, and prophesies his fall,
Diving into his watery funeral:
But Eridan to Cedron must submit
His flowery shore; nor can he envy it,
If when Apollo sings his swans do silent sit.

That heavenly voice I more delight to hear,
Than gentle airs to breathe, or swelling waves
Against the sounding rocks their bosoms tear,
Or whistling reeds, that rutty Jordan laves,
And with their verdure his white head embraves,

To chide the winds, or hiving bees, that fly
About the laughing blooms of sallowy,
Rocking asleep the idle grooms that lazy lie.

And yet how can I hear thee singing go,
When men, incensed with hate, thy death foreset?
Or else why do I hear thee sighing so,
When thou, inflam'd with love, their life dost get,
That love and hate, and sighs and songs are met:
But thus, and only thus thy love did crave,
To send thee singing for us to thy grave,
While we sought thee to kill, and thou soughtst
us to save.

When I remember Christ our burden bears,
I look for glory, but find misery;
I look for joy, but find a sea of tears;
I look that we should live, and find Him die;
I look for angels' songs, and hear Him cry:
Thus what I look, I cannot find so well;
Or rather, what I find I cannot tell,
These banks so narrow are, those streams so highly
swell.

Christ suffers, and in this his tears begin;
Suffers for us—and our joys spring in this;
Suffers to death—here is his manhood seen;
Suffers to rise—and here his Godhead is,—
For man, that could not by himself have ris',
Out of the grave doth by the Godhead rise,
And God, that could not die, in manhood dies,
That we in both might live by that sweet sacrifice.

Go, giddy brains, whose wits are thought so fresh,
Pluck all the flow'rs that nature forth doth throw;

Go, stick them on the cheeks of wanton flesh;
Poor idol (forc'd at once to fall and grow)
Of fading roses, and of melting snow!
Your songs exceed your matter; this of mine
The matter which it sings shall make divine—
As stars dull puddles gild, in which their beauties shine.

Who doth not see drown'd in Deucalion's name
(When earth his men, and sea had lost his shore)
Old Noah? and in Nisus' lock, the fame
Of Sampson yet alive; and long before
In Phaëton's mine own fall I deplore:
But he that conquer'd hell, to fetch again
His virgin widow, by a serpent slain,
Another Orpheus was than dreaming poets feign;

That taught the stones to melt for passion,
And dormant sea, to hear him, silent lie;
And at his voice, the watery nation
To flock, as if they deem'd it cheap, to buy
With their own deaths his sacred harmony:
The while the waves stood still to hear his song,
And steady shore wav'd with the reeling throng
Of thirsty souls, that hung upon his fluent tongue.

What better friendship, than to cover shame?
What greater love, than for a friend to die?
Yet this is better, to asself the blame;
And this is greater, for an enemy:
But more than this, to die, not suddenly,
Not with some common death, or easy pain,
But slowly, and with torments to be slain:
O depth without a depth, far better seen than say'n!

And yet the Son is humbled for the slave,
And yet the slave is proud before the Son:
Yet the Creator for his creature gave
Himself, and yet the creature hastes to run
From his Creator, and self-good doth shun;
And yet the Prince, and God himself doth cry
To man, his traitor, pardon not to fly:
Yet man is God, and traitor doth his Prince defy.

Who is it sees not that he nothing is,
But he that nothing sees? What weaker breast,
Since Adam's armour fail'd, dares warrant his?
That, made by God of all his creatures best,
Straight made himself the worst of all the rest:
If any strength we have, it is to ill;
But all the good is God's, both power and will:
The dead man cannot rise, though he himself may kill.

A tree was first the instrument of strife,
Where Eve to sin her soul did prostitute;
A tree is now the instrument of life,
Though ill that trunk, and this fair body suit:
Ah cursed tree, and yet O blessed fruit!
That death to Him, this life to us doth give:
Strange is the cure, when things past cure revive,
And the Physician dies to make the patient live.

Sweet Eden was the arbour of delight,
Yet in his honey flowers our poison blew;
Sad Gethsemane the bower of baleful night,
Where Christ a health of poison for us drew,
Yet all our honey in that poison grew:

So we from sweetest flowers could suck our bane,
And Christ from bitter venom could again
Extract life out of death, and pleasure out of pain.

A man was first the author of our fall,
A man is now the author of our rise;
A garden was the place we perished all,
A garden is the place he pays our price;
And the old serpent, with a new device,
Hath found a way himself for to beguile:
So he that all men tangled in his wile,
Is now by one man caught, beguiled with his own guile.

The dewy night had with her frosty shade
Immantled all the world, and the stiff ground
Sparkled in ice; only the Lord, that made
All for himself, himself dissolved found—
Sweat without heat, and blood without a wound:
Of heav'n, and earth, and God, and man forlore,[1]
Thrice begging help of those whose sins he bore,
And thrice denied of one, not to deny had swore.

Yet had he been alone of God forsaken,
Or had his body been embroil'd alone
In fierce assault, he might, perhaps, have taken
Some joy in soul, when all joy else was gone;
But that with God—and God to heav'n is flown;
And hell itself out from her grave doth rise,
Black as the starless night—and with them flies,
Yet blacker than they both, the son of blasphemies.

[1] Forsaken.

As when the planets, with unkind aspect,
Call from her caves the meagre pestilence;
The pois'nous vapour, eager to infect,
Obeys the voice of the sad influence,
And vomits up a thousand noisome scents,—
The well of life, flaming his golden flood
With the sick air, fevers the boiling blood,
And poisons all the body with contagious food.

The bold physician, too incautious,
By those he cures himself is murdered;
Kindness infects, pity is dangerous;
And the poor infant, yet not fully bred,
There, where he should be born, lies buried:
So the dark prince, from his infernal cell,
Casts up his grisly torturers of hell,
And whets them to revenge with this insulting spell:—

"See how the world smiles in eternal peace;
While we, the harmless brats, and rusty throng
Of night, our snakes in curls do prank and dress.
Why sleep our drowsy scorpions so long?
Where is our wonted virtue to do wrong?
Are we ourselves, or are we graces grown?
The sons of hell, or heav'n? was never known
Our whips so over-moss'd, and brands so deadly blown.

"O long-desired, never-hop'd-for hour,
When our tormentor shall our torments feel!
Arm, arm yourselves, sad dires[1] of my pow'r,

[1] Diræ, the Furies.

And make our judge for pardon to us kneel:
Slice, launch, dig, tear him with your whips of steel:
Myself in honour of so noble prize,
Will pour you reeking blood, shed with the cries
Of hasty heirs, who their own fathers sacrifice."

With that a flood of poison, black as hell,
Out from his filthy gorge, the beast did spew,
That all about his blessed body fell,
And thousand flaming serpents hissing flew
About his soul, from hellish sulphur threw,
And ev'ry one brandish'd his fiery tongue,
And worming all about his soul they clung;
But he their stings tore out, and to the ground them flung.

So have I seen a rock's heroic breast,
Against proud Neptune, that his ruin threats,
When all his waves he hath to battle press'd,
And with a thousand swelling billows beats
The stubborn stone, and foams, and chafes, and frets,
To heave him from his root, unmoved stand;
And more in heaps the barking surges band,
The more in pieces beat, fly weeping to the strand.

So may we oft a vent'rous father see,
To please his wanton son, his only joy,
Coast all about, to catch the roving bee,
And, stung himself, his busy hands employ
To save the honey for the gamesome boy;
Or from the snake her ranc'rous teeth erase,
Making his child the toothless serpent chase,
Or, with his little hands, her tum'rous gorge embrace.

Thus Christ himself to watch and sorrow gives,
While, dew'd in easy sleep, dead Peter lies;
Thus man in his own grave securely lives,
While Christ alive, with thousand horrors dies,
Yet more for theirs, than his own pardon cries:
No sins he had, yet all our sins he bare;
So much doth God for others' evils care,
And yet so careless men for their own evils are.

See drowsy Peter, see where Judas wakes,
Where Judas kisses him whom Peter flies:
O kiss more deadly than the sting of snakes!
False love more hurtful than true injuries!
Ah me! how dearly God his servant buys!
For God his man at his own blood doth hold,
And man his God for thirty pence hath sold:
So tin for silver goes, and dunghill dross for gold.

Yet was it not enough for Sin to choose
A servant, to betray his Lord to them;
But that a subject must his King accuse;
But that a pagan must his God condemn;
But that a Father must his Son contemn;
But that the Son must his own death desire;
That prince, and people, servant, and the Sire,
Gentile and Jew, and he against himself conspire?

Was this the oil to make thy saints adore thee,
The frothy spittle of the rascal throng?
Are these the verges that are borne before thee,
Base whips of cord, and knotted all along?
Is this thy golden sceptre against wrong,
A reedy cane? is that the crown adorns
Thy shining locks—a crown of spiny thorns?
Are these the angels' hymns, the priests' blasphemous scorns?

Who ever saw honour before asham'd;
Afflicted majesty; debased height;
Innocence guilty; honesty defam'd;
Liberty bound; health sick; the sun in night?
But since such wrong was offer'd unto right,
  Our night is day, our sickness health is grown,
  Our shame is veil'd, this now remains alone
For us—since he was ours, that we be not our own.

Night was ordain'd for rest, and not for pain,
But they, to pain their Lord, their rest contemn;
Good laws to save, what bad men would have slain
And not bad judges, with one breath, by them
The innocent to pardon, and condemn:
  Death for revenge of murd'rers, not decay
  Of guiltless blood—but now, all headlong sway
Man's murderer to save, man's Saviour to slay.

Frail multitude! whose giddy law is list,[1]
And best applause is windy flattering,
Most like the breath of which it doth consist,
No sooner blown but as soon vanishing;
As much desired as little profiting;
  That makes the men that have it oft as light
  As those that give it; which the proud invite,
And fear;—the bad man's friend, the good man's
    hypocrite.

It was but now their sounding clamours sung,
"Blessed is he that comes from the most High!"
And all the mountains with "Hosanna!" rung;
And now, "Away with him—away!" they cry,
And nothing can be heard, but "Crucify!"

[1] Desire.

It was but now, the crown itself they save,
And golden name of King unto him gave;
And now, no king, but only Cæsar they will have.

It was but now they gather'd blooming may,
And of his arms disrob'd the branching tree,
To strew with boughs and blossoms all thy way;
And now the branchless trunk a cross for thee,
And may, dismayed, the coronet must be:
It was but now they were so kind, to throw
Their own best garments where thy feet should go,
And now thyself they strip, and bleeding wounds they show.

See, where the Author of all life is dying:
O fearful day! He dead, what hope of living?
See where the hopes of all our lives are buying:
O cheerful day! they bought, what fear of grieving?
Love, love for hate, and death for life, is giving:
Lo, how his arms are stretched abroad to grace thee,
And, as they open stand, call to embrace thee!
Why stay'st thou then, my soul? O fly, fly, thither haste thee!

His radious head with shameful thorns they tear,
His tender back with bloody whips they rent,
His side and heart they furrow with a spear,
His hands and feet with riving nails they tent;
And, as to disenthral his soul they meant,
They jolly at his grief, and make their game,
His naked body to expose to shame,
That all might come to see, and all might see that came.

Whereat the heaven put out his guilty eye,
That durst behold so execrable sight;
And sabled all in black the shady sky;
And the pale stars, struck with unwonted fright,
Quenched their everlasting lamps in night;
And at his birth, as all the stars heav'n had
Were not enough, but a new star was made,
So now both new and old, and all away did fade.

The amazed angels shook their fiery wings,
Ready to lighten vengeance from God's throne,
One down his eyes upon the manhood flings,
Another gazes on the Godhead—none
But surely thought his wits were not his own;
Some flew to look if it were very he:
But when God's arm unarmed they did see,
Albeit they saw it was, they vow'd it could not be.

The sadden'd air hung all in cheerless black,
Through which the gentle winds soft sighing flew,
And Jordan into such huge sorrow brake,
(As if his holy stream no measure knew,)
That all his narrow banks he overthrew;
The trembling earth with horror inly shook,
And stubborn stones, such grief unus'd to brook,
Did burst, and ghosts awaking from their graves gan look.

The wise philosopher cried, all aghast,
The God of nature surely languished!
The sad centurion cried out as fast,
The Son of God, the Son of God was dead;
The headlong Jew hung down his pensive head,

And homewards fared; and ever, as he went,
He smote his breast, half desperately bent;
The very woods and beasts did seem his death lament.

The graceless traitor round about did look
(He look'd not long, the devil quickly met him)
To find a halter, which he found, and took,
Only a gibbet now he needs must get him;
So on a wither'd tree he fairly set him,
And help'd him fit the rope, and in his thought
A thousand furies, with their whips, he brought;
So there he stands, ready to hell to make his vault.

For him a waking bloodhound, yelling loud,
That in his bosom long had sleeping laid;
A guilty conscience, barking after blood,
Pursued eagerly, nor ever staid
Till the betrayer's self it had betray'd.
Oft chang'd he place, in hope away to wind;
But change of place could never change his mind:
Himself he flies to lose, and follows for to find.

There are but two ways for this soul to have,
When parting from the body, forth it purges;
To fly to heav'n, or fall into the grave,
Where whips of scorpions, with the stinging scourges,
Feed on the howling ghosts, and fiery surges
Of brimstone roll about the cave of night,
Where flames do burn, and yet no spark of light,
And fire both fries and freezes the blaspheming spright.

There lies the captive soul, aye-sighing sore,
Reckoning a thousand years since her first bands;
Yet stays not there, but adds a thousand more,
And at another thousand never stands,
But tells to them the stars, and heaps the sands:
And now the stars are told, and sands are run,
And all those thousand thousand myriads done,
And yet but now, alas! but now all is begun.

With that a flaming brand a fury catch'd,
And shook, and toss'd it round in his wild thought,
So from his heart all joy, all comfort snatch'd,
With ev'ry star of hope; and as he sought
(With present fear, and future grief distraught)
To fly from his own heart, and aid implore
Of him, the more he gives, that hath the more,
Whose storehouse is the heav'ns, too little for his store:

"Stay wretch on earth (cried Satan)—restless rest;
Know'st thou not Justice lives in heav'n; or can
The worst of creatures live among the best:
Among the blessed angels cursed man?
Will Judas now become a Christian?
Whither will Hope's long wings transport thy mind?
Or canst thou not thyself a sinner find?
Or, cruel to thyself, wouldst thou have Mercy kind?

"He gave thee life; why shouldst thou seek to slay him?
He lent thee wealth to feed thy avarice:
He called thee friend—what, that thou shouldst betray him?

He kiss'd thee, though he knew his life the price:
He wash'd thy feet—shouldst thou his sacrifice?
He gave thee bread, and wine, his body, blood,
And at thy heart to enter in he stood;
But then I enter'd in, and all my snaky brood."

As when wild Pentheus, grown mad with fear,
Whole troops of hellish hags about him spies,
Two bloody suns stalking the dusky sphere,
And twofold Thebes runs rolling in his eyes;
Or through the scene staring Orestes flies,
With eyes flung back upon his mother's ghost,
That, with infernal serpents all emboss'd,
And torches quench'd in blood, doth her stern son accost;

Such horrid gorgons, and misformed forms
Of damned fiends, flew dancing in his heart,
That, now unable to endure their storms,
"Fly, fly (he cries) thyself, whate'er thou art,
Hell, hell, already burns in ev'ry part."
So down into his tort'rer's arms he fell,
That ready stood his funeral to yell,
And in a cloud of night to waft him quick to hell.

Yet oft he snatch'd, and started as he hung:
So when the senses half enslumb'red lie,
The headlong body, ready to be flung
By the deluding fancy from some high
And craggy rock, recovers greedily,
And clasps the yielding pillow, half asleep,
And, as from heav'n it tumbled to the deep,
Feels a cold sweat through ev'ry trembling member creep.

There let him hang, embowelled in blood,
There never any gentle shepherd feed
His blessed flocks, nor ever heav'nly food
Fall on the cursed ground, nor wholesome seed,
That may the least delight or pleasure breed:
Let never spring visit his habitation,
But nettles, kix, and all the weedy nation,
With empty elders grow—sad signs of desolation!

There let the dragon keep his habitance,
And stinking carcasses be thrown avaunt,
Fauns, sylvans, and deformed satyrs dance,
Wild cats, wolves, toads, and screech-owls direly chant;
There ever let some restless spirit haunt,
With hollow sound, and clashing chains, to scare
The passengers, and eyes like to the star
That sparkles in the crest of angry Mars afar.

But let the blessed dews for ever show'r
Upon that ground, in whose fair fields I spy
The bloody ensign of our Saviour:
Strange conquest, where the Conqueror must die,
And he is slain that wins the victory!
But he that, living, had no house to owe it,
Now had no grave, but Joseph must bestow it:
O run, ye saints, apace, and with sweet flow'rs bestrow it!

And ye glad spirits, that now sainted sit
On your celestial thrones, in beauty drest,
Though I your tears recount, O let not it
With after-sorrow wound your tender breast,
Or with new grief unquiet your soft rest:

Enough for me your plaints to sound again,
That never could enough myself complain.
Sing, then, O sing aloud, thou Arimathean swain!

But long he stood, in his faint arms upholding
The fairest spoil heaven ever forfeited,
With such a silent passion grief unfolding,
That, had the sheet but on himself been spread,
He for the corse might have been buried;
And with him stood the happy thief, that stole
By night his own salvation, and a shoal
Of Maries, drowned, round about him sat in dole.

At length (kissing his lips before he spake,
As if from thence he fetch'd again his ghost)
To Mary thus, with tears, his silence brake:
"Ah, woeful soul! what joy in all our coast,
When him we hold, we have already lost?
Once didst thou lose thy Son, but found'st again;
Now find'st thy Son, but find'st him lost and slain.
Ah me! though he could death, how canst thou life sustain?

"Where'er, dear Lord, thy shadow hovereth,
Blessing the place wherein it deigns abide,
Look how the earth dark horror covereth,
Clothing in mournful black her naked side,
Willing her shadow up to heaven to glide,
To see and if it meet thee wandering there;
That so, and if herself must miss thee here,
At least her shadow may her duty to thee bear.

"See, how the sun in day-time clouds his face,
And lagging Vesper, loosing his late team,

Forgets in heaven to run his nightly race;
But, sleeping on bright Oeta's top, doth dream
The world a chaos is; no joyful beam
Looks from his starry bower, the heavens do moan,
And trees drop tears, lest we should grieve alone;
The winds have learn'd to sigh, and waters hoarsely groan.

"And you, sweet flowers, that in this garden grow,
Whose happy states a thousand souls envy,
Did you your own felicities but know,
Yourselves, unpluck'd, would to his fun'ral hie—
You never could in better season die:
O that I might into your places slide!
The gate of heaven stands gaping in his side;
Therein my soul should steal, and all her faults should hide.

"Are these the eyes that made all others blind?
Ah! why are they themselves now blemished?
Is this the face in which all beauty shined?
What blast hath thus his flowers debellished?
Are these the feet that on the wat'ry head
Of the unfaithful ocean passage found?
Why go they now so lowly under ground,
Wash'd with our worthless tears, and their own precious wound?

"One hem but of the garments that he wore
Could medicine whole countries of their pain;
One touch of this pale hand could life restore,
One word of these cold lips revive the slain:
Well the blind man thy Godhead might maintain.

What, though the sullen Pharisees repin'd?
He that should both compare, at length would find
The blind man only saw, the seers all were blind.

"Why should they think thee worthy to be slain?
Was it because thou gav'st their blind men eyes?
Or that thou mad'st their lame to walk again?
Or for thou heal'dst their sick men's maladies?
Or mad'st their dumb to speak, and dead to rise?
O could all these but any grace have won,
What would they not to save thy life have done?
The dumb man would have spoke, and lame man
would have run.

"Let me, O let me near some fountain lie,
That through the rock heaves up his sandy head,
Or let me dwell upon some mountain high,
Whose hollow root and baser parts are spread
On fleeting waters, in his bowels bred,
That I their streams, and they my tears may feed:
Or, clothed in some hermit's ragged weed,
Spend all my days in weeping for this cursed deed.

"The life, the which I once did love, I leave;
The love, in which I once did live, I loathe;
I hate the light, that did my light bereave:
Both love and life, I do despise you both.
O, that one grave might both our ashes clothe!
A love, a life, a light I now obtain,
Able to make my age grow young again—
Able to save the sick, and to revive the slain.

"Thus spend we tears—that never can be spent—
On Him, that sorrow now no more shall see;
Thus send we sighs—that never can be sent—

To him that died to live, and would not be
To be there where he would.—Here bury we
This heavenly earth; here let it softly sleep,
The fairest Shepherd of the fairest sheep."
So all the body kiss'd, and homeward went to weep.

So home their bodies went to seek repose,
But at the grave they left their souls behind:
O who the force of love celestial knows!
That can the chains of nature's self unbind,
Sending the body home without the mind.
Ah, blessed virgin! what high angel's art
Can ever count thy tears, or sing thy smart,
When ev'ry nail that pierc'd his hand, did pierce thy heart?

So Philomel, perch'd on an aspen sprig,
Weeps all the night her lost virginity,
And sings her sad tale to the merry twig,
That dances at such joyful misery,
Nor ever lets sweet rest invade her eye;
But leaning on a thorn her dainty chest,
For fear soft sleep should steal into her breast,
Expresses in her song grief not to be express'd.

So when the lark (poor bird!) afar espy'th
Her yet unfeather'd children (whom to save
She strives in vain) slain by the fatal scythe,
Which from the meadow her green locks doth shave,
That their warm nest is now become their grave;
The woful mother up to heaven springs,
And all about her plaintive notes she flings,
And their untimely fate most pitifully sings.

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PART IV.

CHRIST'S TRIUMPH AFTER DEATH.

THE ARGUMENT.

Christ's triumph after death, 1st, In his resurrection, manifested by its effects in the creatures—in himself—2d, In his ascension into heaven; whose joys are described, 1st, By the access of all good, the blessed society of the saints, angels,—the sweet quiet and peace enjoyed under God—the beauty of the place;—the carity (as the school calls it) of the saints' bodies—the impletion of the appetite—the joy of the senses, &c.—2d, By the absence of all evil—by the access of all good again—in the glory of the holy city—in the beatifical vision of God.

But now the second morning, from her bower,
Began to glister in her beams; and now
The roses of the day began to flower
In the eastern garden; for heaven's smiling brow
Half insolent for joy began to show:
The early sun came lively dancing out,
And the brag lambs ran wantoning about,
That heaven and earth might seem in triumph both
to shout.

The engladden'd Spring, forgetful now to weep,
Began to eblazon from her leafy bed;
The waking swallow broke her half year's sleep,
And every bush lay deeply purpured
With violets; the wood's late wintry head

Wide flaming primroses set all on fire,
And his bald trees put on their green attire,
Among whose infant leaves the joyous birds conspire.

And now the taller sons (whom Titan warms)
Of unshorn mountains, blown with easy winds,
Dandled the morning's childhood in their arms,
And, if they chanced to slip the prouder pines,
The under corylets[1] did catch the shines,
To gild their leaves; saw never happier year
Such joyful triumph and triumphant cheer,
As though the aged world anew created were.

Say, Earth, why hast thou got thee new attire,
And stick'st thy habit full of daisies red?
Seems that thou dost to some high thought aspire,
And some new-found-out bridegroom mean'st to wed:
Tell me, ye trees, so fresh apparelled,
So never let the spiteful canker waste you,
So never let the heavens with lightning blast you,
Why go you now so trimly drest, or whither haste you?

Answer me, Jordan, why thy crooked tide
So often wanders from his nearest way,
As though some other way thy stream would slide,
And fain salute the place where something lay.
And you sweet birds, that, shaded from the ray,
Sit carolling and piping grief away,
The while the lambs to hear you dance and play,
Tell me, sweet birds, what is it you so fain would say?

[1] Copses.

And thou, fair spouse of Earth, that every year
Gett'st such a numerous issue of thy bride,
How chance thou hotter shin'st, and draw'st, more near?
Sure thou somewhere some worthy sight hast spied,
That in one place for joy thou canst not bide:
And you, dead swallows, that so lively now
Through the flit air your winged passage row,
How could new life into your frozen ashes flow?

Ye primroses and purple violets,
Tell me, why blaze ye from your leafy bed,
And woo men's hands to rent you from your sets,
As though you would somewhere be carried,
With fresh perfumes and velvets garnished?
But ah! I need not ask, 'tis surely so,
You all would to your Saviour's triumph go:
There would ye all await, and humble homage do.

There should the earth herself, with garlands new
And lovely flowers embellished, adore:
Such roses never in her garland grew,
Such lilies never in her breast she wore,
Like beauty never yet did shine before:
There should the Sun another Sun behold,
From whence himself borrows his locks of gold,
That kindle heaven and earth with beauties manifold.

There might the violet and primrose sweet,
Beams of more lively, and more lovely grace,
Arising from their beds of incense, meet;
There should the swallow see new life embrace
Dead ashes, and the grave unveil his face,

To let the living from his bowels creep,
Unable longer his own dead to keep;
There heaven and earth should see their Lord awake from sleep,—

Their Lord, before by others judged to die
Now judge of all himself; before forsaken
Of all the world, that from his aid did fly,
Now by the saints into their armies taken;
Before for an unworthy man mistaken,
Now worthy to be God confessed; before
With blasphemies by all the basest tore,
Now worshipped by angels, that him low adore:

Whose garment was before indipt in blood,
But now, embrighten'd into heav'nly flame,
The sun itself outglitters, though he should
Climb to the top of the celestial frame,
And force the stars to hide themselves for shame:
Before, that under earth was buried,
But now above the heav'ns is carried,
And there for ever by the angels heried.[1]

So fairest Phosphor, the bright morning star,
But newly wash'd in the green element,
Before the drowsy night is half aware,
Shooting his flaming locks with dew besprent,
Springs lively up into the orient,
And the bright drove, fleeced in gold, he chaces
To drink, that on the Olympic mountain grazes,
The while the minor planets forfeit all their faces.

So long he wander'd in our lower sphere,
That heav'n began his cloudy stars despise,

[1] Worshipped.

Half envious, to see on earth appear
A greater light than flam'd in his own skies:
At length it burst for spite, and out there flies
A globe of winged angels, swift as thought,
That on their spotted feathers lively caught
The sparkling earth, and to their azure fields it brought.

The rest, that yet amazed stood below,
With eyes cast up, as greedy to be fed,
And hands upheld, themselves to ground did throw:
So when the Trojan boy was ravished,
As through the Idalian woods they say he fled,
His aged guardians stood all dismay'd,
Some lest he should have fallen back afraid,
And some their hasty vows and timely prayers said.

"Toss up your heads, ye everlasting gates,
And let the Prince of glory enter in!
At whose brave volley of siderial states,
The sun to blush and stars grow pale, were seen;
When leaping first from earth, he did begin
To climb his angel wings: then open hang
Your crystal doors!" so all the chorus sang
Of heav'nly birds, as to the stars they nimbly sprang.

Hark! how the floods clap their applauding hands,
The pleasant valleys singing for delight;
The wanton mountains dance about the lands,
The while the fields, struck with the heavenly light,
Set all their flowers a smiling at the sight;

The trees laugh with their blossoms, and the sound
Of the triumphant shout of praise, that crown'd
The flaming Lamb, breaking through heaven hath passage found.

Out leap the antique patriarchs, all in haste,
To see the powers of hell in triumph led,
And with small stars a garland interchas'd
Of olive-leaves they bore to crown his head,
That was before with thorns degloried:
After them flew the prophets, brightly stol'd
In shining lawn, and wimpled manifold,
Striking their ivory harps, strung all in cords of gold.

To which the saints victorious carols sung,
Ten thousand saints at once, that with the sound
The hollow vaults of heaven for triumph rung:
The cherubim their clamours did confound
With all the rest, and clapt their wings around:
Down from their thrones the dominations flow,
And at his feet their crowns and sceptres throw,
And all the princely souls fell on their faces low.

Nor can the martyrs' wounds them stay behind,
But out they rush among the heavenly crowd,
Seeking their heaven out of their heaven to find,
Sounding their silver trumpets out so loud,
That the shrill noise broke through the starry cloud,
And all the virgin souls in pure array,
Came dancing forth and making joyous play:
So him they led along into the courts of day.

So him they led into the courts of day,
Where never war nor wounds abide him more;
But in that house eternal peace doth play,
Acquieting the souls that, new before,
Their way to heaven through their own blood did score,
But now, estranged from all misery,
As far as heaven and earth discoasted lie
Swelter in quiet waves of immortality.

Gaze but upon the house where man embowers;
With flowers and rushes paved is his way,
Where all the creatures are his servitors;
The winds do sweep his chambers every day;
And clouds do wash his rooms; the ceiling gay,
Starred aloft, the gilded knobs embrave:—
If such a house God to another gave,
How shine those glittering courts he for himself will have!

And if a sullen cloud, as sad as night,
In which the sun may seem embodied,
Depur'd of all his dross, we see no white,
Burning in melted gold his wat'ry head,
Or round with iv'ry edges silvered,
What lustre super-excellent will he
Lighten on those that shall his sunshine see,
In that all-glorious court in which all glories be?

If but one sun, with his diffusive fires,
Can paint the stars and the whole world with light,
And joy and life into each heart inspires,
And ev'ry saint shall shine in heav'n as bright
As doth the sun in his transcendent might,

(As faith may well believe what truth once says)
What shall so many suns' united rays,
But dazzle all the eyes that now in heav'n we praise?

Here let my Lord hang up his conquering lance,
And bloody armour with late slaughter warm,
And, looking down on his weak militants,
Behold his saints, amidst their hot alarm,
Hang all their golden hopes upon his arm;
And in this lower field dispacing wide,
Through windy thoughts that would their sails misguide,
Anchor their fleshly ships fast in his wounded side.

Here may the band, that now in triumph shines
And that (before they were invested thus)
In earthly bodies carried heavenly minds,
Pitch round about, in order glorious,
Their sunny tents and houses luminous;
All their eternal day in songs employing,
Joying their end, without end of their joying,
While their Almighty Prince destruction is destroying.

Full, yet without satiety, of that
Which whets and quiets greedy appetite,
Where never sun did rise, nor ever sat;
But one eternal day, and endless light
Gives time to those whose time is infinite—
Speaking with thought, obtaining without fee,
Beholding him whom never eye could see,
And magnifying him that cannot greater be.

How can such joy as this want words to speak?
And yet what words can speak such joy as this?
Far from the world, that might their quiet break,
Here the glad souls the face of beauty kiss,
Pour'd out in pleasure, on their beds of bliss;
And drunk with nectar torrents, ever hold
Their eyes on him, whose graces manifold
The more they do behold, the more they would behold.

Their sight drinks lovely fires in at their eyes,
Their brain sweet incense with fine breath accloys,
That on God's sweating altar burning lies;
Their hungry ears feed on their heavenly noise,
That angels sing, to tell their untold joys;
Their understanding naked truth, their wills
The all and self-sufficient Goodness fills,
That nothing here is wanting but the want of ills.

No sorrow now hangs clouding on their brow,
No bloodless malady empales their face,
No age drops on their hairs his silver snow,
No nakedness their bodies doth embase,
No poverty themselves and theirs disgrace,
No fear of death the joy of life devours,
No unchaste sleep their precious time deflowers,
No loss, no grief, no change wait on their winged hours.

But now their naked bodies scorn the cold,
And from their eyes joy looks, and laughs at pain;
The infant wonders how he came so old,
The old man how he came so young again;
Still resting, though from sleep they still refrain;

Where all are rich, and yet no gold they owe,
And all are kings, and yet no subjects know,
All full, and yet no time on food they do bestow.

For things that pass are past, and in this field
The indeficient spring no winter fears;
The trees together fruit and blossom yield,
The unfading lily leaves of silver bears,
And crimson rose a scarlet garment wears;
And all of these on the saints' bodies grow,
Not, as they wont, on baser earth below:
Three rivers here, of milk, and wine, and honey,
flow.

About the holy city rolls a flood
Of molten crystal, like a sea of glass,
On which weak stream a strong foundation stood:
Of living diamonds the building was,
That all things else, besides itself, did pass.
Her streets, instead of stones, the stars did pave,
And little pearls for dust it seem'd to have,
On which soft-streaming manna, like pure snow,
did wave.

In midst of this city celestial,
Where the Eternal Temple should have rose,
Lighten'd the Idea Beatifical—
End and beginning of each thing that grows;
Whose self no end nor yet beginning knows,
That hath no eyes to see, nor ears to hear,
Yet sees and hears, and is all eye, all ear;
That nowhere is contain'd, and yet is everywhere:

Changer of all things, yet immutable;
Before and after all, the first and last;

That, moving all, is yet immoveable;
Great without quantity; in whose forecast
Things past are present, things to come are past;
Swift without motion; to whose open eye
The hearts of wicked men unbreasted lie;
At once absent and present to them, far and nigh.

It is no flaming lustre, made of light;
No sweet consent, or well-tim'd harmony;
Ambrosia for to feast the appetite,
Or flowery odour, mix'd with spicery;
No soft embrace, or pleasure bodily;
And yet it is a kind of inward feast,
A harmony that sounds within the breast,
An odour, light, embrace, in which the soul doth rest.

A heavenly feast, no hunger can consume;
A light unseen, yet shines in every place;
A sound no time can steal; a sweet perfume
No winds can scatter; an entire embrace
That no satiety can e'er unlace:
Ingrac'd into so high a favour, there
The saints, with their beaupeers whole worlds outwear,
And things unseen do see, and things unheard do hear.

Ye blessed souls, grown richer by your spoil,
Whose loss, though great, is cause of greater gains,
Here may your weary spirits rest from toil,
Spending your endless ev'ning that remains,
Among those white flocks and celestial trains,
That feed upon their Shepherd's eyes, and frame
That heavenly music of so wondrous fame,
Psalming aloud the holy honours of his name!

Had I a voice of steel to tune my song,
Were ev'ry verse as smoothly fil'd as glass,
And ev'ry member turned to a tongue,
And ev'ry tongue were made of sounding brass;
Yet all that skill, and all this strength, alas!
  Should it presume to gild, were misadvis'd,
  The place, where David hath new songs devis'd,
As in his burning throne he sits emparadis'd.

Most happy prince, whose eyes those stars behold,
Treading ours under feet! now mayst thou pour
That overflowing skill, wherewith of old
Thou wont'st to comb rough speech; now mayst thou show'r
Fresh streams of praise upon that holy bow'r,
  Which well we heaven call; not that it rolls,
  But that it is the haven of our souls—
Most happy prince, whose sight so heav'nly sight beholds!

Ah, foolish shepherds, that were wont to esteem
Your god all rough and shaggy-hair'd to be!
And yet far wiser, shepherds, than ye deem;
For who so poor (though who so rich) as he,
When, with us sojourning in low degree,
  He wash'd his flocks in Jordan's spotless tide,
  And, that his dear remembrance might abide,
Did to us come, and with' us liv'd, and for us died?

But now so lively colours did embeam
His sparkling forehead, and so shiny rays
Kindled his flaming locks, that down did stream
In curls along his neck, where sweetly plays
(Singing his wounds of love in sacred lays)

His dearest spouse,[1] spouse of the dearest lover,
Knitting a thousand knots over and over,
And dying still for love; but they her still recover:—

Fairest of fairs, that at his eyes doth dress
Her glorious face, those eyes from whence are shed
Infinite belamours; where, to express
His love, high God all heaven as captive leads,
And all the banners of his grace dispreads,
And in those windows doth his arms englaze,
And on those eyes the angels all do gaze,
And from those eyes the lights of heaven do catch their blaze.

But let the Kentish lad,[2] that lately taught
His oaten reed the trumpet's silver sound—
Young Thyrsilis—and for his music brought
The willing spheres from heav'n, to lead around
The dancing nymphs and swains, that sung, and crown'd
Eclecta's hymen with ten thousand flow'rs
Of choicest praise; and hung her heav'nly bow'rs
With saffron garlands, dress'd for nuptial paramours;—

Let his shrill trumpet, with her silver blast,
Of fair Eclecta and her spousal bed,
Be the sweet pipe, and smooth encomiast:
But my green Muse—hiding her younger head
Under old Camus' flaggy banks, that spread

[1] The church.
[2] Phineas Fletcher.—See the second extract from the "Purple Island."

Their willow locks abroad, and all the day
With their own wat'ry shadows wanton play—
Dares not those high amours, and love-sick songs
essay.

Impotent words, weak lines, that strive in vain—
In vain, alas! to tell so heav'nly sight,—
So heav'nly sight, as none can greater feign,
Feign what he can, that seems of greatest might:
Might any yet compare with Infinite?
Infinite sure those joys, my words but light;
Light is the palace where she dwells—O blessed
wight!

GEORGE WITHER.

BORN 1588; DIED 1667.

OF the writings of this once popular poet, the principal are, "The Shepherd's Hunting," "Emblems," "Songs of the Church." He also published numerous minor productions, the greater part of which were called forth either by the public events of the calamitous times in which he lived, or by his personal sufferings in the cause of the church and monarchy. With the exception of a passage or two of extraordinary beauty, familiar to the lovers of old English verse, his works have long passed into unmerited obscurity; nor is it likely their reputation will ever be retrieved; the brilliant gems which occasionally relieve their general mediocrity, being too few to induce republication in a fastidious age.

GEORGE WITHER.

DIVINE SUPPORT.

I SHOULD not care how hard my fortunes were,
Might still my hopes be such, as now they are,
Of help divine; nor fear how poor I be,
If thoughts yet present still may bide in me;
For they have left assurance of such aid,
That I am of no dangers now afraid.

Yea, now I see, methinks, what weak and vain
Supporters I have sought, to help sustain
My fainting heart; when some injurious hand
Would undermine the station where I stand.
Methinks I see how scurvy, and how base
It is, to scrape for favours and for grace
To men of earthly minds, and unto those
Who may, perhaps, before to-morrow, lose
Their wealth, or their abus'd authority,
And stand as much in want of help as I.

Methinks, in this new rapture I do see
The hand of God from heaven supporting me,
Without those rotten aids for which I whin'd
When I was of my other, vulgar mind;
And if in some one part of me it lay,
I now could cut that limb of me away.

Still might I keep this mind, there were enough
Within myself (beside that cumbrous stuff
We seek without) which, husbanded aright,
Would make me rich in all the world's despite;
And I have hopes, that had she quite bereft me
Of those few rags and toys, which yet are left me,
I should on God alone so much depend,
That I should need nor wealth, nor other friend.

FEAR OF DEATH A WEAKNESS.

Poor feeble spirits, would you ne'er away,
But dwell for ever in a piece of clay?
What find you here, wherein you take delight,
Or what's to seeing that is worth the sight?
What? do the heavens thy endeavours bless,
And wouldst thou therefore live still to possess
The joy thou hast? Seek't not; perhaps to-morrow
Thou'lt wish to have died to-day, to 'scape the sorrow
Thou then shalt see: for shame, take stronger hearts,
And add more courage to your better parts;
For Death's not to be fear'd, sith 'tis a friend
That of your sorrows makes a gentle end.
But here a quality I call to mind,
That I amongst the common people find;
This 'tis, a weak one too:—When they perceive
A friend near death, and ready now to leave
This wretched life; and if they hear him say
Some parting words, as if he might not stay:
"Nay, say not so," (these comforters reply;)
"Take heart—your time's not come—you shall not die.

What, man! and grace of God, you shall be stronger,
And live, no doubt, yet many a fair day longer.
Think not on death,"—with many such-like words,
Such as their understanding best affords.
But where is now become these people's wit?
What do their knowledges esteem more fit
Than death to think on—chiefly when men be
About to put off their mortality?
Methinks they rather should persuade them then,
Fearless to be resolved to die like men;
For, want of such a resolution stings
At point of death, and dreadful horror brings
Ev'n to the soul; 'cause, wanting preparation,
She lies despairing of her own salvation.
Yea, and moreover, this full well know I,
He that's at any time afraid to die,
Is in weak case; and, whatsoe'er he saith,
Hath but a wavering and a feeble faith.

THE MARIGOLD.

When with a serious musing I behold
The grateful and obsequious marigold,
How duly, every morning, she displays
Her open breast, when Titan spreads his rays;
How she observes him in his daily walk,
Still bending tow'rds him her small slender stalk;
How, when he down declines, she droops and mourns,
Bedew'd, as 'twere with tears, till he returns;

And how she vails her flowers when he is gone,
As if she scorned to be looked on
By an inferior eye; or did contemn
To wait upon a meaner light than him:
—When this I meditate, methinks the flowers
Have spirits far more generous than ours,
And give us fair examples, to despise
The servile fawnings and idolatries,
Wherewith we court these earthly things below,
Which merit not the service we bestow.
But, O my God! though grovelling I appear
Upon the ground, and have a rooting here,
Which hales me downward, yet in my desire
To that which is above me I aspire;
And all my best affections I profess
To Him that is the Sun of Righteousness.
Oh! keep the morning of his incarnation,
The burning noontide of his bitter passion,
The night of his descending, and the height
Of his ascension,—ever in my sight;
That, imitating Him in what I may,
I never follow an inferior way.

WELL-DOING.

When to the fields we walk, to look upon
Some skilful marksman, so much heed we not
How many arrows from his bow are gone,
As we observe how nigh the mark he shot;
And justly we deride that man who spends
His time and shafts, but never aim doth take
To hit the white, or foolishly pretends
The number of the shots doth archers make.

So God, who marketh our endeavours here,
Doth not by tale account of them receive;
But heedeth rather how well-meant they were,
And at his will how rightly aim'd we have.
It is not mumbling over, thrice a day,
A set of *Ave Maries* or of creeds,
Or many hours formally to pray,
When from a dull devotion it proceeds;
Nor is it up and down the land to seek,
To find those well-breath'd lecturers, that can
Preach thrice a sabbath, and six times a week,
Yet be as fresh as when they first began:
Nor is it such-like things, performed by number,
Which God respects; nor doth his wisdom crave
Those many vanities, wherewith some cumber
Their bodies, as if those their souls could save.
For not much-doing, but well-doing, that
Which God commands, the doer justifies.
To pray without devotion is to prate;
And hearing is but half our exercise:—
We ought not, therefore, to regard, alone,
How often, but how well, the work be done.

THE GLORY OF CHRIST, UNDER THE FIGURE OF SOLOMON. CANT. iii.

WHAT'S he that from the desert, there,
Doth like those smoky pillars come,
Which from the incense, and the myrrh,
And all the merchant-spices fume?
His bed—which, lo! is Solomon's—
Three-score stout men about it stand;
They are of Israel's valiant ones,
And all of them with swords in hand.

All those are men expert in fight,
And each man on his thigh doth wear
A sword, that terrors of the night
May be forbid from coming there.
King Solomon a goodly place,
With trees of Lebanon did rear;
Each pillar of it silver was,
And gold the bases of them were.

With purple covered he the same,
And all the pavement—thoroughout—
Oh, daughters of Jerusalem!
For you, with charity is wrought.
Come, Sion's daughters! come away!
And, crowned with his diadem,
King Solomon behold you may.
That crown his mother set on him,
When he a married man was made,
And in his heart contentment had.

HENRY KING, BISHOP OF CHICHESTER.

BORN 1591; DIED 1669.

THIS learned divine was the author of a metrical translation of the Psalms, a small volume of miscellaneous poems in English, and also of several Greek and Latin poems, and some religious tracts. It is a sufficient attestation to his character that he was advanced to a bishopric by King Charles, expressly with a view that by his mildness, unfeigned piety, and blameless life, he might help to win back the affections of the people, alienated by its enemies from the episcopal order. There is a peculiar charm in his poetry, which is owing less to the ease and sweetness of style, by which it is frequently distinguished, than to its faithfully reflecting the qualities of the author's mind and heart.

HENRY KING.

THE EXEQUY.

ON THE DEATH OF A BELOVED WIFE.

ACCEPT, thou shrine of my dead saint
Instead of dirges this complaint;
And, for sweet flowers to crown thy hearse,
Receive a strew of weeping verse
From thy grieved friend, whom thou might'st see
Quite melted into tears for thee.
Dear loss! Since thy untimely fate,
My task hath been to meditate
On thee, on thee: thou art the book,
The library whereon I look,
Though almost blind; for thee, loved clay,
I languish out, not live the day,
Using no other exercise
But what I practise with mine eyes:
By which wet glasses I find out
How lazily Time creeps about
To one that mourns: this, only this
My exercise and business is:
So I compute the weary hours
With sighs dissolved into showers.

Thou hast benighted me; thy set
This eve of blackness did beget,
Who wast my day, (though overcast
Before thou hast thy noon-tide past,)
And I remember must in tears,
Thou scarce hadst seen so many years
As day tells hours. By thy clear sun
My love and fortune first did run;
But thou wilt never more appear
Folded within my hemisphere,
Since both thy light and motion
Like a fled star is fall'n and gone.
I could allow thee for a time
To darken me and my sad clime;
Were it a month, a year, or ten,
I would thy exile live till then;
And all that space my mirth adjourn,
So thou wouldst promise to return,
And putting off thy ashy shroud
At length disperse this sorrow's cloud.
But, woe is me! the longest date
Too narrow is to calculate
These empty hopes: never shall I
Be so much blest as to descry
A glimpse of thee, till that day come
Which shall the earth to cinders doom,
And a fierce fever must calcine
The body of this world like thine,
(My little world!) That fit of fire
Once off, our bodies shall aspire
To our soul's bliss; then we shall rise,
And view ourselves with clearer eyes
In that calm region, where no night
Can hide us from each other's sight.

Meantime thou hast her, Earth: much good
May my harm do thee, since it stood
With Heaven's will I might not call
Her longer mine, I give thee all
My short-lived right and interest
In her, whom living I loved best.
Be kind to her; and, prithee, look
Thou write into thy doomsday-book
Each parcel of this rarity
Which in thy casket shrin'd doth lie:
See that thou make thy reckoning straight,
And yield her back again by weight;
For thou must audit on thy trust
Each grain and atom of this dust,
As thou wilt answer him that lent—
Not gave thee—my dear monument.

Sleep on, my love, in thy cold bed
Never to be disquieted!
My last good night! thou wilt not wake
Till I thy fate shall overtake:
Till age, or grief, or sickness must
Marry my body to that dust
It so much loves; and fill the room
My heart keeps empty in thy tomb.
Stay for me there; I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale.
And think not much of my delay,
I am already on the way,
And follow thee with all the speed
Desire can make, or sorrows breed.
Each minute is a short degree,
And every hour a step towards thee.
At night when I betake to rest,
Next morn I rise nearer my west

Of life, almost by eight hours' sail,
Than when sleep breath'd his drowsy gale.
Thus from the sun my bottom steers
And my day's compass downward bears:
Nor labour I to stem the tide
Through which to thee I swiftly glide.
'Tis true, with shame and grief I yield,
Thou like the van first took'st the field,
And gotten hast the victory
In thus adventuring to die
Before me, whose more years might crave
A just precedence in the grave.
But hark! my pulse, like a soft drum,
Beats my approach, tells thee I come;
And slow howe'er my marches be,
I shall at last sit down by thee.
The thought of this bids me go on,
And wait my dissolution
With hope and comfort: Dear, (forgive
The crime,) I am content to live
Divided, with but half a heart,
Till we shall meet and never part.

LIFE.

Like to the falling of a star,
Or as the flights of eagles are,
Or like the fresh spring's gaudy hue,
Or silver drops of morning dew,
Or like a wind that chafes the flood,
Or bubbles which on water stood—
Even such is man, whose borrow'd light
Is straight call'd in, and paid to-night.

The wind blows out; the bubble dies;
The spring entomb'd in autumn lies;
The dew dries up; the star is shot;
The flight is past—and man forgot.

THE LABYRINTH.

Life is a crooked labyrinth, and we
Are daily lost in that obliquity.
'Tis a perplexed circle, in whose round
Nothing but sorrows and new sins abound.
How is the faint impression of each good
Drown'd in the vicious channel of our blood,
Whose ebbs and tides, by their vicissitude,
Both our great Maker and ourselves delude!
O wherefore is the most discerning eye
Unapt to make its own discovery?
Why is the clearest and best-judging mind
In its own ill's prevention dark and blind?
Dull to advise, to act precipitate,
We scarce think what to do but when too late;
Or if we think, that fluid thought, like seed,
Roots there to propagate some fouler deed.
Still we repent and sin—sin and repent;
We thaw and freeze, we harden and relent.
Those fires which cool'd to-day, the morrow's heat
Rekindles: thus frail nature does repeat
What she unlearnt, and still by learning on
Perfects her lesson of confusion.
Sick soul! what cure shall I for thee devise,
Whose lep'rous state corrupts all remedies?
What medicine or what cordial can be got
For thee, who poison'st thy best antidote?

Repentance is thy bane, since thou by it
Only reviv'st the fault thou didst commit.
Nor griev'st thou for the past, but art in pain
For fear thou mayst not act it o'er again:
So that thy tears, like water spilt on lime,
Serve not to quench, but to advance the crime.
My blessed Saviour! unto thee I fly
For help against this homebred tyranny,
Thou canst true sorrow in my soul imprint,
And draw contrition from a breast of flint;
Thou canst reverse this labyrinth of sin,
My wild affects[1] and actions wander in.
O guide my faith! and, by thy grace's clue,
Teach me to hunt that kingdom at the view
Where true joys reign, which like their day shall last,—
Those never clouded, nor that overcast.

THE GRAVE A REFUGE.

—In the grave no sparks of envy live,
No hot comparisons that causes give
Of quarrel, or that our affections move
Any condition, save their own, to love.
There are no objects there but shades and night,
Yet is that darkness better than the light.
There lives a silent harmony; no jar
Or discord can that sweet soft concert mar.
The grave's deaf ear is clos'd against all noise
Save that which rocks must hear—the angel's voice,

[1] Affections.

Whose trump shall wake the world, and raise up men
Who in earth's bosom slept, bed-rid till then.
What man then would, who on death's pillow slumbers,
Be re-inspired with life, though golden numbers
Of bliss were pour'd into his breast, though he
Were sure in change to gain a monarchy?
A monarch's glorious state, compared with his,
Less safe, less free, less firm, less quiet is;
Nor ne'er was any prince advanc'd so high,
That he was out of reach of misery:
Never did story yet a law report
To banish fate or sorrow from his court:
Where'er he moves, by land or through the main,
These go along, sworn members of his train.
But he whom the kind earth hath entertain'd,
Hath in her womb a sanctuary gain'd,
Whose charter and protection arm him so
That he is privileg'd from future woe.
The coffin's a safe harbour, where he rides
Land-bound, below cross winds, or churlish tides.
For grief, sprung up with life, was man's half-brother,
Fed by the taste brought forth by sin, the mother;
And since the first seduction of the wife,
God did decree to grief a lease for life;
Which patent in full force continue must,
Till man that disobey'd revert to dust.
So that life's sorrows ratified by God
Cannot expire, or find their period,
Until the soul and body disunite,
And by two different ways from each take flight.
But they dissolved once, our woes disband,
The assurance cancell'd by one fatal hand:

Soon as the passing-bell proclaims me dead,
My sorrows sink with me—lie buried
In the same heap of dust.

THE WOES OF ISAIAH.—Isaih, v.

Woe to the worldly men, whose covetous
Ambition labours to join house to house,
Lay field to field, till their enclosures edge
The plain, girdling a country with one hedge!
That leave no place unbought, no piece of earth
Which they will not engross, making a dearth
Of all inhabitants, until they stand
Unneighbour'd, as unblest, within their land.
This sin cries in God's ear, who hath decreed
The ground they sow shall not return the seed.
They that unpeopled countries to create
Themselves sole lords—made many desolate
To build up their own house, shall find at last
Ruin and fearful desolation cast
Upon themselves: their mansion shall become
A desert, and their palace prove a tomb;
Their vines shall barren be, their land yield tares;
Their house shall have no dwellers, they no heirs.
Woe unto those that with the morning sun
Rise to drink wine, and sit till he have done
His weary course; not ceasing until night
Have quench'd their understanding with the light;
Whose raging thirst, like fire, will not be tam'd—
The more they have the more they are inflam'd.
Men that live thus, as if they liv'd in jest,
Fooling their time with music and a feast;

That did exile all sounds from their soft ear
But of the harp, must this sad discord hear
Composed in threats: the feet which measures
tread,
Shall in captivity be fettered;
Famine shall scourge them for their vast excess,
And hell revenge their monstrous drunkenness.
Woe unto those that countenance a sin,
Siding with vice, that it may credit win
By their unhallowed vote; that do benight
The truth with error, putting dark for light,
And light for dark; that call an evil good,
And would by vice have virtue understood;
That with their frown can sour an honest cause,
Or sweeten any bad by their applause.
That justify the wicked for reward;
And, void of moral goodness or regard,
Plot with detraction to traduce the fame
Of him whose merit hath enrolled his name
Among the just. Therefore God's vengeful ire
Glows on his people, and becomes a fire
Whose greedy and exalted flame shall burn,
Till they like straw or chaff to nothing turn,
Because they have rebelled against the right,
To God and law perversely opposite,
As plants which sun nor showers did ever bless,
So shall their root convert to rottenness;
And their succession's bud, in which they trust,
Shall, like Gomorrah's fruit, moulder to dust.
Woe unto those that, drunk with self-conceit,
Value their own designs at such a rate
Which human wisdom cannot reach; that sit
Enthron'd as sole monopolists of wit;
That outlook reason, and suppose the eye
Of nature blind to their discovery,

Whilst they a title make to understand
Whatever secret's bosom'd in the land.
But God shall imp their pride, and let them see
They are but fools in a sublime degree:
He shall bring down and humble those proud eyes,
In which false glasses only they look'd wise;
That all the world may laugh, and learn by it—
There is no folly to[1] pretended wit.
Woe unto those that draw iniquity
With cords, and by a vain security
Lengthen the sinful trace, till their own chain
Of many links, form'd by laborious pain,
Do pull them into hell; that as with lines
And cart-ropes drag on their unwilling crimes;
Who, rather than they will commit no sin,
Tempt all occasions to let it in,
As if there were no God, who must exact
The strict account for ev'ry vicious fact—
Nor judgment after death. "If any be,
Let him make speed (say they) that we may see.
Why is his work retarded by delay?
Why doth himself thus linger on the way?
If there be any judge or future doom,
Let it and him with speed together come."
Unhappy men! that challenge and defy
The coming of that dreadful Majesty!
Better by much, for you, he did reverse
His purposed sentence on the universe;
That time's revolting hand would lag the year,
And so put back his day which is too near.
Behold his signs advanc'd like colours fly,
To tell the world that his approach is nigh;

[1] To be compared to.

And, in a furious march, he's coming on,
Swift as the raging inundation,
To scour the sinful world, 'gainst which is bent
Artillery that never can be spent!—
Bows strung with vengeance, and flame-feathered darts,
Headed with death, to wound transgressing hearts;
His chariot-wheels wrapt in the whirlwind's gyre;
His horses hoof'd with flint and shod with fire,
In which amaze, where'er they fix their eye,
Or on the melting earth, or up on high,
To seek heaven's shrunk lights, nothing shall appear
But night and horror in their hemisphere;
Nor shall the affrighted sense more objects know,
Than darken'd skies above, and hell below.

A PENITENTIAL HYMN.

Hearken, O God! unto a wretch's cries,
Who low dejected at thy footstool lies.
Let not the clamour of my heinous sin
Drown my requests, which strive to enter in
At these bright gates, which always open stand
To such as beg permission at thy hand.

For well I know, if thou in rigour deal,
I can nor pardon ask, not yet appeal;
To my hoarse voice heaven will no audience grant,
But deaf as brass, and hard as adamant,
Beat back my words: therefore I bring to thee
A gracious Advocate to plead for me.

What though my lep'rous soul no Jordan can
Recure, nor floods of the lav'd ocean
Make clean? Yet, from my Saviour's bleeding side
Two large and medicinal rivers glide:—
Lord! wash me where those streams of life abound,
And new Bethesdas flow from every wound.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

BORN 1592; DIED 1664.

THE chief poems of Quarles are, the "Scripture Histories of Sampson, Job, Esther, and Jonah;" "Emblems;" the "School of the Heart;" "Sion's Elegies;" and "Hieroglyphics of the Life of Man;" of which, the "Emblems" alone continued to retain some degree of popular esteem within the memory of the existing generation. Quarles was a writer of extensive learning, a lively fancy, and profound piety. His style, everywhere devoid of polish, presents nevertheless some of the best specimens of manly and vigorous versification to be found among our poets of the second order; but is debased by vulgarisms, and deformed by quaint conceits. The space assigned to the following selections may appear disproportionately large to those who have only beheld from a distance that languid twilight of the author's fame, which lingers among the few who yet read his "Emblems," and perhaps one or two of his less-remembered works, merely as aids to devotion. It is believed, however, that few persons will attentively peruse these specimens, without imbibing a wish to become further acquainted with the volumes from which they are derived.

FRANCIS QUARLES.

VANITY OF THE WORLD.

FALSE world, thou ly'st: thou canst not lend
The least delight:
Thy favours cannot gain a friend,
They are so slight:
Thy morning pleasures make an end
To please at night:
Poor are the wants that thou supply'st
And yet thou vaunt'st, and yet thou vy'st
With heaven; fond earth, thou boasts; false world,
thou ly'st.

Thy babbling tongue tells golden tales
Of endless treasure;
Thy bounty offers easy sales
Of lasting pleasure;
Thou ask'st the conscience what she ails,
And swear'st to ease her:
There's none can want where thou supply'st:
There 's none can give where thy deny'st.
Alas! fond world, thou boasts; false world, thou
ly'st.

What well-advised ear regards
What earth can say?
Thy words are gold, but thy rewards
Are painted clay:
Thy cunning can but pack the cards,
Thou canst not play:
Thy game at weakest, still thou vy'st;
If seen, and then revy'd, deny'st:
Thou art not what thou seem'st; false world, thou ly'st.

Thy tinsel bosom seems a mint,
Of new-coin'd treasure;
A paradise, that has no stint,
No change, no measure;
A painted cask, but nothing in't,
Nor wealth, nor pleasure:
Vain earth! that falsely thus comply'st
With man; vain man! that thou rely'st
On earth; vain man, thou dot'st; vain earth, thou ly'st.

What mean dull souls, in this high measure,
To haberdash
In earth's base wares, whose greatest treasure
Is dross and trash?
The height of whose enchanting pleasure
Is but a flash?
Are these the goods that thou supply'st
Us mortals with? Are these the high'st?
Can these bring cordial peace? false world, thou ly'st.

THE NEW HEART.

So, now the soul's sublim'd: her sour desires
Are recalcin'd in heaven's well-temper'd fires:
The heart restor'd and purg'd from drossy nature,
Now finds the freedom of a new-born creature:
It lives another life, it breathes new breath;
It neither fears nor feels the sting of death.
Like as the idle vagrant (having none)
That boldly adopts, each house he views, his own;
Makes ev'ry purse his chequer; and at pleasure,
Walks forth, and taxes all the world, like Cæsar;
At length, by virtue of a just command,
His sides are lent to a severer hand;
Whereon his pass, not fully understood,
Is texted in a manuscript of blood:
Thus pass'd from town to town; until he come
A sore repentant to his native home:
Ev'n so the rambling heart, that idly roves
From crimes to sin, and uncontroll'd removes
From lust to lust, when wanton flesh invites
From old-worn pleasures to new choice delights,
At length corrected by the filial rod
Of his offended but his gracious God,
And lash'd from sins to sighs; and by degrees,
From sighs to vows, from vows to bended knees;
From bended knees to a true pensive breast;
From thence to torments, not by tongues exprest,
Returns; and (from his sinful self exil'd)
Finds a glad Father, he a welcome child:
O then it lives; O then it lives involv'd
In secret raptures; pants to be dissolv'd:
The royal offspring of a second birth
Sets ope to heav'n, and shuts the doors to earth.

If love-sick Jove commanded clouds should hap
To rain such show'rs as quicken'd Danae's lap:
Or dogs (far kinder than their purple master)
Should lick his sores, he laughs, nor weeps the faster.
If earth (heav'n's rival) dart her idle ray,
To heav'n, 'tis wax, and to the world, 'tis clay:
If earth present delights, it scorns to draw,
But like the jet unrub'd, disdains that straw:
No hope deceives it, and no doubt divides it;
No grief disturbs it, and no error guides it;
No guilt condemns it, and no folly shames it;
No sloth besots it, and no lust enthrals it;
No scorn afflicts it, and no passion galls it;
It is a carkanet of immortal life;
An ark of peace; the lists of sacred strife;
A purer piece of endless transitory;
A shrine of grace, a little throne of glory:
A heav'n-born offspring of a new-born birth;
An earthly heav'n; an ounce of heav'nly earth.

FLEEING FROM WRATH.

O WHITHER shall I fly; what path untrod
Shall I seek out to 'scape the flaming rod
Of my offended, of my angry God?

Where shall I sojourn? what kind sea will hide
My head from thunder? Where shall I abide,
Until his flames be quench'd or laid aside?

What, if my feet should take their hasty flight,
And seek protection in the shades of night?
Alas! no shades can blind the God of light.

What, if my soul should take the wings of day,
And find some desert? if she spring away,
The wings of vengeance clip as fast as they.

What, if some solid rock should entertain
My frighted soul? Can solid rocks restrain
The stroke of justice, and not cleave in twain?

Nor sea, nor shade, nor shield, nor rock, nor cave,
Nor silent deserts, nor the sullen grave,
Where flame-eyed fury means to smite, can save.

The seas will part, graves open, rocks will split;
The shield will cleave; the frighted shadow flit;
Where justice aims, her fiery darts must hit.

No, no, if stern-brow'd vengeance means to thunder,
There is no place above, beneath, nor under,
So close, but will unlock, or rive in sunder.

'Tis vain to flee: 'tis neither here nor there
Can 'scape that hand until that hand forbear;
Ah me! Where is he not, that's every where?

'Tis vain to fly; till gentle mercy show
Her better eye, the further off we go
The swing of justice deals the mightier blow.

Th' ingenuous child, corrected, doth not fly
His angry mother's hand, but clings more nigh,
And quenches with his tears her flaming eye.

Shadows are faithless, and the rocks are false;
No trust in brass, no trust in marble walls;
Poor cots are even as safe as princes' halls.

Great God, there is no safety here below;
Thou art my fortress, though thou seem'st my foe,
'Tis thou that strik'st the stroke must guard the blow.

Thou art my God; by thee I fall or stand;
Thy grace hath giv'n me courage to withstand
All tortures, but my conscience and thy hand.

I know thy justice is thyself; I know,
Just God, thy very self is mercy too;
If not to thee, where—whither—should I go?

Then work thy will. If passion bid me flee,
My reason shall obey; my wings shall be
Stretch'd out no further than from thee to thee.

TIME FOR REPENTANCE.

My glass is half unspent; forbear to arrest
My thriftless day too soon: my poor request
Is that my glass may run but out the rest.

My time-devoured minutes will be done
Without thy help; see, see how swift they run!
Cut not my thread before my thread be spun.

The gain's not great I purchase by this stay;
What loss sustain'st thou by so small delay,
To whom ten thousand years are but a day?

My following eye can hardly make a shift
To count my winged hours; they fly so swift,
They scarce deserve the bounteous name of gift:

The secret wheels of hurrying Time do give
So short a warning, and so fast they drive,
That I am dead before I seem to live.

And what's a life? a weary pilgrimage,
Whose glory in one day doth fill the stage
With childhood, manhood, and decrepit age.

And what's a life? the flourishing array
Of the proud summer meadow, which to-day
Wears her green plush, and is to-morrow hay.

Read on this dial, how the shades devour
My short-liv'd winter's day; hour eats up hour;
Alas! the total's but from eight to four.

Behold these lilies (which thy hands have made
Fair copies of my life, and open laid
To view) how soon they droop, how soon they fade!

Shade not that dial, night will blind too soon;
My non-aged day already points to noon;
How simple is my suit! how small my boon!

Nor do I beg this slender inch, to while
The time away, or safely to beguile
My thoughts with joy; here's nothing worth a smile.

No, no; 'tis not to please my wanton ears
With frantic mirth; I beg but hours, not years:
And what thou giv'st me, I will give to tears.

Draw not that soul which would be rather led!
That seed has yet not broke my serpent's head;
O, shall I die before my sins are dead?

Behold these rags; am I a fitting guest
To taste the dainties of thy royal feast,
With hands and face unwashed, ungirt, unblest?

First, let the Jordan streams (that find supplies
From the deep fountain of thy heart) arise,
And cleanse my spots, and clear my lep'rous eyes.

I have a world of sins to be lamented:
I have a sea of tears that must be vented:
O spare till then; and then I die contented.

DELIGHT IN GOD ONLY.

I LOVE (and have some cause to love) the earth:
She is my Maker's creature; therefore good:
She is my mother, for she gave me birth;
She is my tender nurse; she gives me food;
But what's a creature, Lord, compar'd with thee?
Or what's my mother, or my nurse to me?

I love the air: her dainty sweets refresh
My drooping soul, and to new sweets invite me;
Her shrill-mouth'd quire sustains me with their flesh,
And with their polyphonian notes delight me:

But what's the air or all the sweets that she
Can bless my soul withal, compared to thee?

I love the sea: she is my fellow-creature,
My careful purveyor; she provides me store:
She walls me round; she makes my diet greater;
She wafts my treasure from a foreign shore:
But, Lord of oceans, when compar'd with thee,
What is the ocean, or her wealth to me?

To heav'n's high city I direct my journey,
Whose spangled suburbs entertain mine eye;
Mine eye, by contemplation's great attorney,
Transcends the crystal pavement of the sky:
But, what is heav'n, great God, compar'd to thee?
Without thy presence heav'n's no heaven to me.

Without thy presence earth gives no refection;
Without thy presence sea affords no treasure;
Without thy presence air's a rank infection;
Without thy presence heav'n itself no pleasure:
If not possess'd, if not enjoy'd in thee,
What's earth, or sea, or air, or heav'n to me?

The highest honour, that the world can boast,
Are subjects far too low for my desire;
The brightest beams of glory are (at most)
But dying sparkles of thy living fire:
The loudest flames that earth can kindle, be
But nightly glow-worms if compar'd to thee.

Without thy presence, wealth is bags of cares;
Wisdom, but folly; joy, disquiet—sadness:

Friendship is treason, and delights are snares;
Pleasures but pain, and mirth but pleasing madness:
Without thee, Lord, things be not what they be,
Nor have they being, when compar'd with thee.

In having all things, and not thee, what have I?
Not having thee, what have my labours got?
Let me enjoy but thee, what further crave I?
And having thee alone, what have I not?
I wish nor sea, nor land; nor would I be
Possess'd of heav'n, heav'n unpossess'd of thee.

BREVITY OF LIFE.

Behold
How short a span
Was long enough, of old,
To measure out the life of man!
In those well-temper'd days his time was then
Survey'd, cast up, and found but three-score years and ten.

Alas!
And what is that?
They come, and slide, and pass,
Before my pen can tell thee what.
The posts of time are swift, which having run
Their sev'n short stages o'er, their short-liv'd task is done.

Our days
Begun we lend
To sleep, to antic plays

And toys, until the first stage end:
Twelve waning moons, twice five times told, we give
To unrecover'd loss—we rather breathe than live.

We spend
A ten years' breath,
Before we apprehend
What 'tis to live, or fear a death:
Our childish dreams are fill'd with painted joys,
Which please our sense awhile, and waking, prove but toys.

How vain,
How wretched is
Poor man, that doth remain
A slave to such a state as this!
His days are short, at longest: few, at most;
They are but bad, at best; yet lavish'd out, or lost.

They be
The secret springs,
That make our minutes flee
On wheels more swift than eagles' wings:
Our life's a clock, and every gasp of breath
Breaths forth a warning grief, till time shall strike a death.

How soon
Our new-born light
Attains to full-aged noon!
And this, how soon to gray-hair'd night!
We spring, we bud, we blossom, and we blast
Ere we can count our days, our days they flee so fast.

They end
When scarce begun;
And ere we apprehend
That we begin to live, our life is done:
Man, count thy days; and if they fly too fast
For thy dull thoughts to count, count every day thy last.

DECAY OF LIFE.

The day grows old, the low-pitch'd lamp hath made
No less than treble shade,
And the descending damp doth now prepare
To uncurl bright Titan's hair;
Whose western wardrobe now begins to unfold
Her purples, fring'd with gold,
To clothe his evening glory, when the alarms
Of rest shall call to rest in restless Thetis arms.

Nature now calls to supper, to refresh
The spirits of all flesh;
The toiling ploughman drives his thirsty teams,
To taste the slipp'ry streams:
The droyling swineherd knocks away, and feasts
His hungry whining guests:
The boxbill ouzle, and the dappled thrush
Like hungry rivals meet at their beloved bush.

And now the cold autumnal dews are seen
To cobweb every green;
And by the low-shorn rowins doth appear
The fast-declining year:

The sapless branches doff their summer suits
And wain their winter fruits;
And stormy blasts have forc'd the quaking trees
To wrap their trembling limbs in suits of mossy frieze.

Our wasted taper now hath brought her light
To the next door to night;
Her sprightless flame grown with great snuff, doth turn
Sad as her neighb'ring urn:
Her slender inch, that yet unspent remains,
Lights but to further pains,
And in a silent language bids her guest
Prepare his weary limbs to take eternal rest.

Now careful age hath pitch'd her painful plough
Upon the furrow'd brow;
And snowy blasts of discontented care
Have blanch'd the falling hair:
Suspicious envy mix'd with jealous spite
Disturbs his weary night:
He threatens youth with age; and now, alas!
He owns not what he is, but vaunts the man he was.

Gray hairs peruse thy days, and let thy past
Read lectures to thy last:
Those hasty wings that hurried them away
Will give these days no day:
The constant wheels of nature scorn to tire
Until her works expire:
That blast that nipp'd thy youth, will ruin thee;
That hand that shook the branch will quickly strike the tree.

EARTH AND HEAVEN.

In hell no life, in heaven no death there is;
In earth both life and death, both bale and bliss;
In heaven's all life, no end, nor new supplying;
In hell's all death, and yet there is no dying.
Earth (like a partial ambidexter) doth
Prepare for death, or life, prepares for both:
Who lives to sin in hell his portion's given,
Who dies to sin, shall after live in heaven.
Though earth my nurse be, heaven, be thou my father;
Ten thousand deaths let me endure rather
Within my nurse's arms, than one to thee;
Earth's honour with thy frowns, is death to me:
I live on earth, upon a stage of sorrow;
Lord, if thou pleasest, end the play to-morrow.
I live on earth, as in a dream of pleasure;
Awake me when thou wilt, I wait thy leisure:
I live on earth, but as of life bereaven;
My life's with thee, for, Lord, thou art in heaven

VAIN BOASTING.

Can he be fair, that withers at a blast?
Or he be strong, that airy breath can cast?
Can he be wise, that knows not how to live?
Or he be rich, that nothing hath to give?
Can he be young, that's feeble, weak, and wan?
So fair, strong, wise—so rich, so young is man.
So fair is man, that death (a parting blast,)
Blasts his fair flow'r, and makes him earth at last;

So strong is man, that with a gasping breath
He totters, and bequeaths his strength to death;
So wise is man, that if with death he strive,
His wisdom cannot teach him how to live;
So rich is man, that (all his debts being paid,)
His wealth's the winding-sheet wherein he's laid;
So young is man, that (broke with care and sorrow)
He 's old enough to-day to die to-morrow.
Why bragg'st thou then, thou worm of five-foot long?
Thou art neither fair, nor strong, nor wise, nor rich, nor young.

TRIAL BEFORE REWARD.

What joyful harvester did e'er obtain
The sweet fruition of his hopeful gain,
Till he in hardy labours first had pass'd
The summer's heat, and stormy winter's blast?
A sable night returns a shining morrow,
And days of joy ensue sad nights of sorrow;
The way to bliss lies not on beds of down,
And he that had no cross deserves no crown.
There's but one heaven, one place of perfect ease,
In man it lies, to take it where he please,
Above, or here below: and few men do
Enjoy the one, and taste the other too:
Sweating, and constant labour wins the goal
Of rest; afflictions clarify the soul,
And like hard masters, give more hard directions,
Tutoring the nonage of uncurb'd affections.
Wisdom, the antidote of sad despair,
Make sharp afflictions seem not as they are,

Through patient sufferance; and doth apprehend,
Not as they seeming are, but as they end.
To bear affliction with a bended brow,
Or stubborn heart, is but to disallow
The speedy means to health; salve heals no sore,
If misapplied, but makes the grief the more.
Who sends affliction, sends an end, and he
Best knows what's best for him, what's best for me:
Tis not for me to carve me where I like;
Him pleases when he list to stroke or strike.
I'll neither wish nor yet avoid temptation,
But still expect it, and make preparation:
If he think best, my faith shall not be tried,
Lord, keep me spotless from presumptuous pride:
If otherwise with his trial, give me care,
By thankful patience to prevent despair:
Fit me to bear whate'er thou shalt assign;
I kiss the rod, because the rod is thine.
Howe'er, let me not boast, nor yet repine,
With trial, or without, Lord, make me thine.

CONFIDENCE IN GOD.

Among the noble Greeks it was no shame
To lose a sword; it but deserv'd the name
Of war's disastrous fortune; but to yield
The right and safe possession of the shield,
Was foul reproach, and manless cowardice,
Far worse than death to him that scorn'd to prize
His life before his honour: honour's won
Most in a just defence; defence is gone,

The shield once lost. The wounded Theban cried,
"How fares my shield?" which safe, he smiled,
and died.
True honour bides at home, and takes delight
In keeping, not in gaining, of a right;
Scorns usurpation, nor seeks she blood,
And thirsts to make her name not great, as good:
God gives a right to man; to man, defence
To guard it given; but when a false pretence
Shall ground her title on a greater might,
What doth he else but war with heav'n, and fight
With Providence? God sets the princely crown
On heads of kings; who then may take it down?
No juster quarrel, or more noble fight,
Than to maintain where God hath given a right:
There's no despair of conquest in that war,
Where God's the leader: policy's no bar,
To his designs; no power can withstand
His high exploits, within whose mighty hand
Are all the corners of the earth; the hills
His fensive bulwarks are, which when he wills,
His lesser breath can bandy up and down,
And crush the world, and with a wink, can drown
The spacious universe in suds of clay,
Where heav'n is leader, heav'n must win the day;
God reaps his honour hence; that combat's safe,
Where he's a combatant, and ventures half.
Right's not impair'd with weakness, but prevails
In spite of strength, when strength and power fails:
Frail is the trust reposed on troops of horse;
Truth in a handful finds a greater force.
Lord, mail my heart with faith, and be my shield,
And if a world confront me, I'll not yield.

REFLECTIONS ON DEATH.

The Egyptians, amidst their solemn feasts,
Used to welcome, and present their guests
With the sad sight of man's anatomy,
Served in with this loud motto, "All must die."
Fools often go about, when as they may
Take better vantage of a nearer way.
Look well into your bosoms; do not flatter
Your known infirmities; behold what matter
Your flesh was made of; man, cast back thine eye
Upon the weakness of thine infancy;
See how thy lips hang on thy mother's breast,
Bawling for help, more helpless than a beast.
Liv'st thou to childhood? then behold what toys
Do mock the sense, how shallow are thy joys!
Com'st thou to downy years? See how deceits
Gull thee with golden fruit, and with false baits
Slily beguile the prime of thy affection.
Art thou attained at length to full perfection
Of ripened years? Ambition hath now sent
Thee on her frothy errand? Discontent
Pays thee thy wages. Do thy grizzly hairs
Begin to cast account of many cares
Upon thy head? The sacred lust of gold
Now fits thy spirit, for fleshly lust too cold;
Makes thee a slave to thine own base desire,
Which melts and hardens at the self-same fire.
Art thou decrepit? Then thy very breath
Is grievous to thee, and each grief's a death.
Look where thou list, thy life is but a span,
Thou art but dust, and, to conclude—a man.
Thy life's a warfare, thou a soldier art,
Satan's thy foe-man, and a faithful heart

Thy two-edg'd weapon, patience thy shield,
Heaven is thy chieftain, and the world thy field.
To be afraid to die, or wish for death,
Are words and passions of despairing breath:
Who doth the first, the day doth faintly yield;
And who the second, basely flies the field.
Man's not a lawful steersman of his days,
His bootless wish nor hastens nor delays:
We are God's hired workmen; he discharges
Some late at night, and (when he list) enlarges
Others at noon, and in the morning some:
None may relieve himself, till he bid, Come:
If we receive for one half day, as much
As they that toil till evening, shall we grutch?

SEARCH AFTER HAPPINESS.

The wisest men that nature e'er could boast,
For secret knowledge of her power, were lost,
Confounded, and in deep amazement stood,
In the discovery of the chiefest good:
Keenly they hunted, beat in every brake,
Forwards they went, on either hand, and back
Return'd they counter; but their deep-mouth'd art,
(Though often challeng'd scent, yet) ne'er could start
In all the enclosures of philosophy,
That game, from squat,[1] they term felicity:
They jangle, and their maxims disagree;
As many men, to many minds there be.

[1] Squat signifies the cowering of a hare, on her form.

One digs to Pluto's throne, thinks there to find
Her grace, rak'd up in gold: another's mind
Mounts to the courts of kings, with plumes of honour
And feather'd hopes, hopes there to seize upon her;
A third unlocks the painted gate of pleasure,
And ransacks there, to find this peerless treasure;
A fourth, more sage, more wisely melancholy,
Persuades himself, her deity's too holy
For common hands to touch; he rather chooses
To make a long day's journey to the muses:
To Athens, gown'd, he goes, and from that school
Returns unsped, a more instructed fool.
Where lies she then? or lies she any where?
Honours are bought and sold, she rests not there;
Much less in pleasures hath she her abiding,
For they are shar'd to beasts, and ever sliding;
Nor yet in virtue, virtue's often poor,
And (crush'd with fortune) begs from door to door;
Nor is she sainted in the shrine of wealth;
That makes men slaves, is unsecur'd from stealth.
Conclude we then, felicity consists
Not in exterior fortunes, but her lists
Are boundless, and her large extension
Outruns the pace of human apprehension;
Fortunes are seldom measur'd by desert:
The fairer face has oft the fouler heart;
Sacred felicity doth ne'er extend
Beyond itself: in it all wishes end:
The swelling of an outward fortune can
Create a prosperous, not a happy man:
A peaceful conscience is the true content,
And wealth is but her golden ornament.

I care not so my kernel relish well,
How slender be the substance of my shell;
My heart being virtuous, let my face be wan,
I *am* to God, I only *seem* to man.

MAN'S INGRATITUDE.

A THANKFUL heart hath earn'd one favour twice,
But he that is ungrateful, wants no vice:
The beast, that only lives the life of sense,
Prone to his several actions, and propense
To what he does, without the advice of will,
Guided by nature, (that does nothing ill)
In practick maxims, proves it a thing hateful,
To accept a favour, and to live ungrateful:
But man, whose more diviner soul hath gain'd
A higher step to reason; nay, attain'd
A higher step than that, the light of grace,
Comes short of them, and in that point more base
Than they, most prompt and versed in that rude,
Unnatural, and high sin, ingratitude.
The stall-fed ox, that is grown fat, will know
His careful feeder, and acknowledge too;
The prouder stallion will at length espy
His master's bounty in his keeper's eye;
The air-dividing falcon will requite
Her falc'ner's pains with a well-pleasing flight;
The generous spaniel loves his master's eye;
And licks his fingers, though no meat be by:
But man, ungrateful man, that's born and bred
By heaven's immediate pow'r; maintain'd and fed

By his providing hand; observ'd, attended
By his indulgent grace; preserv'd, defended
By his prevailing arm: this man, I say,
Is more ungrateful, more obdure than they.
By him we live and move, from him we have
What blessings he can give, or we can crave:
Food for our hunger, dainties for our pleasure;
Trades for our business; pastimes for our leisure.
In grief, he is our joy; in want, our wealth;
In bondage, freedom; and in sickness, health;
In peace, our council; and in war, our leader;
At sea, our pilot; and in suits, our pleader;
In pain, our help; in triumph, our renown;
In life, our comfort; and in death, our crown:
Yet man, O most ungrateful man, can ever
Enjoy thy gift, but never mind the giver;
And like the swine, though pamper'd with enough,
His eyes are never higher than the trough.
We still receive; our hearts we seldom lift
To heaven; but drown the giver in the gift;
We taste the scollops, and return the shells—
Our sweet pomegranates want their silver bells:
We take the gift; the hand that did present it
We oft reward; forget the friend that sent it.
A blessing given to those will not disburse
Some thanks, is little better than a curse.
Great giver of all blessings, thou that art
The Lord of gifts, give me a grateful heart:
O give me that, or keep thy favours from me!
I wish no blessings with a vengeance to me.

THE SUFFERINGS OF JERUSALEM,

AND RFLECTIONS UPON THEM:

FROM "SION'S ELEGIES," A PARAPHRASE OF THE LAMENTATIONS OF JEREMIAH.

ELEGY I.

ALAS! my torments, my distracted fears
Have no commerce with reasonable tears:
How hath heaven's absence dark'ned the renown
Of Sion's glory with one angry frown!
How hath the Almighty clouded those bright beams,
And chang'd her beauties' streamers into streams!
Sion, the glory of whose refulgent fame
Gave earnest of an everlasting name,
Is now become an indigested mass,
And ruin is, where that brave glory was.
How hath heaven struck her earth-admired name
From th' height of honour, to the depth of shame!

ELEGY II.

O! HOW unsufferable is the weight
Of sin! how miserable is their state,
The silence of whose secret sin conceals
The smart, till justice to revenge appeals!
How ponderous are my crimes, whose ample scroll
Weighs down the pillars of my broken soul!

Their sour, masked with sweetness, oversway'd me,
And with their smiling kisses, they betray'd me;
Betray'd me to my foes, and what is worse,
Betray'd me to myself, and heaven's curse,
Betray'd my soul to an eternal grief,
Devoid of hope, for e'er to find relief.

ELEGY III.

Turn where I list, new cause of woe presents
My poor distracted soul with new laments:
Where shall I turn? shall I implore my friends?
Ah, summer friendship with the summer ends;
In vain to them my groans, in vain my tears,
For harvest friends can find no winter ears.
Or shall I call my sacred priests for aid?
Alas! my pined priests are all betray'd
To death and famine; in the streets they cried
For bread, and whilst they sought for bread, they died.
Vengeance could never strike so hard a blow,
As when she sends an unlamented woe.

ELEGY IV.

You noisome weeds, that lift your crests so high,
When better plants for want of moisture die;
Think you to flourish ever? and (unspied)
To shoot the flowers of your fruitless pride?

If plants be cropt, because their fruits are small,
Think you to thrive, that bear no fruit at all?
Look down, great God, and from their places tear
These weeds, that suck the juice should make us bear:
Undew'd with showers, let them see no sun,
But feel those frosts, that thy poor plants have done.
O cleanse thy garden, that the world may know
We are the seed that thy right hand did sow.

ELEGY V.

NEVER, ah! never yet, did vengeance brand
A state with deeper ruin, than thy land;
Dear Sion, how could mischief be more keen,
Or strike thy glory with a sharper spleen?
Whereto, Jerusalem, to what shall I
Compare this thy unequall'd misery?
Turn back to ages past, search deep records:
Theirs are, thine cannot be, express'd in words.
Would, would to God, my life's cheap price might be
Esteem'd of value, but to ransom thee!
Would I could cure thy grief! but who is able
To heal that wound that is immedicable?

ELEGY VI.

PEOPLE that travel through thy wasted land,
Gaze on thy ruins, and amazed stand,

They shake their spleenful heads, disdain, deride
The sudden downfal of so fair a pride,
They clap their joyful hands, and fill their tongues
With hisses, ballads, and with lyric songs:
Her torments give their empty lips new matter,
And with their scornful fingers point they at her:
"Is this," say they, "that place, whose wonted fame
Made troubled earth to tremble at her name?
Is this that state? are these those goodly stations?
Is this that mistress, and that queen of nations?"

ELEGY VII.

TRUST not thy eyelids, lest a flattering sleep
Bribe them to rest, and they forget to weep:
Pour out thy heart, thy heart dissolv'd in tears,
Weep forth thy plaints in the Almighty's ears:
O let thy cries, thy cries to heaven addressed,
Disturb the silence of thy midnight rest;
Prefer the sad petitions of thy soul
To heaven, ne'er close thy lips, till heaven condole.
Confounded Sion, and her wounded weal,
That God that smit, oh move that God to heal!
Oh, let thy tongue ne'er cease to call, thine eye
To weep, thy pensive heart ne'er cease to cry!

ELEGY VIII.

In thee, dear Lord, my pensive soul respires,
Thou art the fulness of my choice desires;
Thou art that sacred spring, whose waters burst
In streams to him, that seeks with holy thirst;
Thrice happy man, thrice happy thirst to bring
The fainting soul to so, so sweet a spring;
Thrice happy he, whose well-resolved breast
Expects no other aid, no other rest;
Thrice happy he, whose downy age had been
Reclaim'd by scourges from the prime of sin;
And, early season'd with the taste of truth,
Remembers his Creator in his youth.

ELEGY IX.

Thou great Creator, whose diviner breath
Preserves thy creature, joy'st not in his death,
Look down from thy eternal throne, that art
The only rock of a despairing heart;
Look down from heaven, O thou, whose tender ear
Once heard the trickling of one single tear.
How art thou now estranged from his cry,
That sends forth rivers from his fruitful eye?
How often hast thou with a gentle arm,
Rais'd me from death, and bid me fear no harm?
What strange disaster caus'd this sudden change?
How wert thou once so near, and now so strange?

ELEGY X.

Impetuous famine, sister to the sword,
Left hand of death, child of the infernal lord,
Thou torturer of mankind, that with one stroke,
Subject'st the world to thy imperious yoke:
What pleasure tak'st thou in the tedious breath
Of pined mortals, or their ling'ring death?
The sword, thy generous brother's not so cruel,
He kills but once, fights in a noble duel;
But thou (malicious fury) dost extend
Thy spleen to all, whose death can find no end:
Alas! my hapless weal can want no woe,
That feels the rage of sword, and famine too.

ELEGY XI.

Ne'er had the splendour of thy bright renown
Been thus extinguished, Judah, thy fast crown
Had ne'er been spurn'd from thy imperial brow,
Plenty had nurs'd thy soul, thy peaceful plough
Had fill'd thy fruitful quarters with increase,
Hadst thou but known thyself, and loved peace:
But thou hast broke that sacred truth, concluded
Betwixt thy God and thee; vainly deluded
Thyself with thine own strength, with deadly feud
Thy furious priests and prophets have pursu'd
The mourning saints of Sion, and did slay
All such as were more just, more pure than they.

ELEGY XII.

Ye drooping sons of Sion, O arise,
And shut the flood-gates of your flowing eyes,
Surcease your sorrows, and your joys attend,
For heaven hath spoke it, and your griefs shall end.
Believe it, Sion; seek no curious sign,
And wait heaven's pleasure, as heav'n waited thine.
And thou, triumphing Edom, that dost lie
In beds of roses, thou, whose prosperous eye
Did smile to see the gates of Sion fall,
Shalt be subjected to the self-same thrall;
Sion, that weeps, shall smile; and Edom's eye,
That smiles so fast, as fast shall shortly cry.

ON CHURCH CONTEMNERS.

Those church contemners, that can easily weigh
The profit of a sermon with a play;
Whose testy stomachs can digest as well,
A proffer'd injury, as a sermon-bell;
That say unwonted prayers with the like wills,
As queasy patients take their loathed pills;
To what extremity would they be driven,
If God, in judgment, should but give them heav'n!

AFFLICTION.

When thou afflicts me, Lord, if I repine,
I show myself to be my own, not thine.

A SOLILOQUY.

WHERE shall I find my God? O where, O where,
Shall I direct my steps to find him there?
Shall I make search in swelling bags of coin?
Ah! no; for God and Mammon cannot join.
Do beds of down contain this heavenly stranger?
No, no, he's rather cradled in some manger:
Dwells he in wisdom? is he gone that road?
No, no, man's wisdom's foolishness with God:
Or hath some new plantation yet unknown,
Made him their king, adorn'd him with their crown?
No, no; the kingdoms of the earth think scorn
To adorn his brows with any crown but thorn.
Where shall I go to trace, where go to wind him?
My Lord is gone; and O! I cannot find him:
I'll ransack the dark dungeons; I'll inquire
Into the furnace, after the seventh fire:
I'll seek in Daniel's den, and in Paul's prison;
I'll search his grave, and see if he be risen:
I'll go to the house of mourning; and I'll call
At every alms-abused hospital:
I'll go and ask the widow that's opprest;
The heavy-laden that inquireth rest.
I'll search the corners of all broken hearts;
The wounded conscience, and the soul that smarts;
The contrite spirit fill'd with filial fear—
Ay, there he is; and nowhere else but there:
Spare not to scourge thy pleasure,[1] O my God,
So I may find thy presence with thy rod.

[1] As much as thou pleasest.

SINS.

Sins, in respect of man, all mortal be;
All venial, Jesu, in respect of Thee.

THE CRUELTY OF MAN.

And dars't thou venture still to live in sin,
And crucify thy dying Lord again?
Were not his pangs sufficient? Must he bleed
Yet more? O, must our sinful pleasures feed
Upon his torments, and augment the story
Of the sad passion of the Lord of glory!
Is there no pity? Is there no remorse
In human breasts? Is there a firm divorce
Betwixt all mercy and the hearts of men?
Parted for ever—ne'er to meet again?
No mercy bides with us: 'tis thou alone,
Hast it, sweet Jesu, for us, that have none
For thee: thou hast forestall'd our markets so,
That all's above, and we have none below:
Nay, blessed Lord, we have not wherewithal
To serve our shiftless selves; unless we call
To thee, that art our Saviour, and hast power
To give, and whom we crucify each hour:
We are cruel, Lord, to thee, and ourselves too;
Jesu forgive us; we know not what we do.

ON ALEXANDER.

No marvel, thou great monarch didst complain,
And weep there were no other worlds to gain,

Thy griefs and thy complaints were not amiss:—
He's grief enough, that finds no world but this.

THE SINNER'S REFUGE.

He that shall shed, with a presumptous hand,
The blood of man, must by thy just command
Be put to death; the murderer must die;
Thy law denies him refuge where to fly:
Great God, our hands have slain a man; nay, further,
They have committed a presumptuous murder
Upon a guiltless man; nay, what is worse,
They have betrayed our brother to the curse
Of a reproachful death; nay, what exceeds,
It is our Lord, our dying Saviour bleeds;
Nay, more, it is thy Son, thy only Son:
All this have we, all this our hands have done.
On what dear objects shall we turn our eye?
Look to the law: O! by the law we die.
Is there no refuge, Lord? no place that shall
Secure our souls from death? Ah, none at all?
What shall poor mortals do? Thy laws are just,
And most irrevocable: shall we trust
Or fly to our own merits, and be freed
By our good works? Ay, there were help indeed!
Is there no city for a soul to fly
And save itself? Must we resolve to die?
O infinite! O not to be exprest!
Nay, not to be conceived by the breast
Of men or angels! O transcendent love!
Incomprehensible! as far above

The reach of man, as man's deserts are under
The sacred benefit of so blest a wonder!
The very blood our sinful hands have shed,
Cries loud for mercy, and those wounds do plead
For those that made them: he, that pleads, forgives,
And is both God and man; both dead and lives.
He whom we murdered is become our guardian;
He's man to suffer, and he's God to pardon:
He's our protection here; our refuge city,
Whose living springs run piety and pity.
Go then, my soul, and pass the common bounds
Of passion, go, and kneel before his wounds;
Go, touch them with thy lips; thou need'st not fear—
They will not bleed afresh, though thou be there:
But if they do, that very blood thou spilt,
Believe it, will plead thy pardon, not thy guilt.

THE WIDOW'S CRUSE.

Lord, I'm in debt, and have not wherewithal
To pay: my score is great, my wealth but small.
My house is poorly furnished, and my food
Is slender, I have nothing that is good:
Lord, if my wasted fortunes prove no better,
My debt is ev'n as desperate as the debtor:
All the relief thy servant this long while
Hath had, is but a little cruse of oil:
There's none will give of alms: I neither get
Enough to satisfy my wants nor debt.
Lord, if thou please to show the self-same art
Upon the slender vessel of my heart,

The prophet did upon the widow's cruse,
I shall have oil to sell, have oil to use;
So shall my debt be paid, and I go free:
No debt is desperate in respect of thee.

OBLOQUY.

I FEAR'D the world and I were too acquainted;
I hope my fears are like her joys, but painted:
Had I not been a stranger, as I past,
Her bawling curs had never bark'd so fast.

ON MAN'S TWO ENEMIES.

Two potent enemies attend on man,
One's fat and plump, the other lean and wan
The one fawns and smiles, the other weeps as fast;
The first Presumption is, Despair the last:
That feeds upon the bounty of full treasure,
Brings jolly news of peace, and lasting pleasure;
This feeds on want, unapt to entertain
God's blessings; finds them ever in the wane.
Their maxims disagree; but their conclusion
Is the self-same; both jump in man's confusion.
Lord, keep me from the first, or else I shall
Soar up and melt my waxen wings and fall:
Lord, keep the second from me; lest I then
Sink down so low, I never rise again:
Teach me to know myself, and what I am,
And my presumption will be turned to shame:

Give me true faith to know thy dying Son,
What ground has then despair to work upon?
To avoid my shipwreck upon either shelf,
O, teach me, Lord, to know my God—myself.

ON ABEL'S BLOOD.

Abel was silent, but his blood was strong,
Each drop of guiltless blood commands a tongue,
A tongue that cries. 'Tis not a tongue, implores
For gentle audience; 'tis a tongue that roars
For hideous vengeance; 'tis a tongue that's bold
And full of courage, and that cannot hold:
O, what a noise my blessed Saviour's blood
Makes now in heaven! how strong it cries! how loud!
But not for vengeance: from his side has sprung
A world of drops; from every drop, a tongue.

THE TWO SUITORS.

The soul is like a virgin, for whose love
Two jealous suitors strive; both daily move
For nuptial favour; both, with lover's art,
Plead for the conquest of the virgin's heart.
The first, approaching, knocked, and knocked again;
The door being opened, at his entering in,
He blush'd; and (as young bashful lovers use)
Is more than half discouraged, ere he sues:
At length, that love that taught him what to fear,
Gave resolution to present her ear

With what he hop'd, and in a lover's fashion,
He oft repeats the story of his passion.
He vows his faith, and the sincere perfection
Of undissembled and entire affection:
He pleads for equal mercy from her eye;
And must have love, or else, for love, must die:
His present means were short, he made profession
Of a fair jointure, though but small possession:
And in a word, to make his passion good,
He offers to deserve her with his blood.
The other boldly enters; with the strong
And sweet-lip'd rhetoric of a courtly tongue
Salutes her gentle ears; his lips discover
The amorous language of a wanton lover;
He smiles and fawns, and now and then lets fly
Imperious glances from his sparkling eye;
Bribes her more orient neck with pearl; with charms,
Enclosing bracelets, decks her ivory arms;
He boasts the extent of his imperial power,
And offers wealth and glory for a dower.
Betwixt them both the virgin stands perplex'd;
The first tale pleas'd her well, until the next
Was told; she lik'd the one, the other; loath
To make a choice, she could affect them both;
The one was jocund, full of sprightly mirth,
The other, better born, of nobler birth;
The second sued in a completer fashion;
Ay, but the first show'd deeper wounds of passion;
The first was sadly modest; and the last
More rudely pleasant; his fair looks did cast
More amorous flames; but yet the other's eye
Did promise greater nuptial loyalty.
The last's more; yet riches, but for life,
Make a poor widow of a happy wife:

The first's estate's but small, if not made good
By death: fair jointures comfort widowhood.
Whom shall this virgin choose? Her thoughts approve
The last, for present wealth; the first, for love:
Both may not be enjoy'd: her heart must smother
Her love to one, if she affect the other.
Ah, silly virgin! is the choice so hard
In two extremes? Can thy weak thoughts reward
Two, so unequal, with a like respect?
Know'st thou not which to slight, and which to affect?
Submit to better judgment, and advise
With thy best friend; O trust not thine own eyes.
This last, that seems so pleasant, so acute,
Is but a slave, drest in his Lord's old suit:
He brags of glory, and of princely power,
When he is kick'd and baffled every hour:
The treasure that he boasts is not his own,
He basely stole it, and the theft is known;
For which he is arraign'd, condemn'd to the pains
Of death; his sentence is, to hang in chains.
His plot 's to bring thee in as deep as he;
Believ't, it is thy blood he seeks, not thee.
The bribes he gave thee are but stol'n: fond girl,
Discard those bracelets, and disclaim that pearl.
The first, whose oft-repeated knocks did crave
Admittance, was the Lord to that base slave:
His faith is loyal, and as firm his vow;
To him, his life's not half so dear as thou:
That wealth, that honour, that dissembled power,
That pleasant peasant offer'd as a dower,
Is that fair Lord's: nor peace, nor pow'r, nor wealth,
Can any challenge from him, but by stealth.

Match there, my soul, and let thy sacred vows
Plight holy contracts with so sweet a spouse:
His left hand's full of treasure, and his right
Of peace, and honour, and unknown delight:
He'll give thee wealth, and in thy wealth content,
For present means: and (when thy glass has spent
Her latest sand, that time untransitory
Thy days) a jointure of eternal glory.

TO SIR JULIUS CÆSAR, MASTER OF THE ROLLS.

The high perfections, wherewith heav'n does please
To crown our transitory days, are these:—
Goods well possessed, and not possessing thee;
A faithful friend, equal in love, degree:
Lands fruitful, and not conscious of a curse;
A boastless hand; a charitable purse;
A smiling conscience; a contented mind;
A sober knowledge, with true wisdom join'd;
A breast well temper'd; diet without art,
Surfeit, or harm; a wisely simple heart;
Pastimes ingenuous, lawful, manly, sparing;
A spirit not contentious, rash, but daring;
A body healthful, sound, and fit for labour;
A house well order'd, and an equal neighbour;
A prudent wife, and constant to the roof;
Sober, but yet not sad, and fair enough;
Sleep seasonable, moderate, and secure;
Actions heroic, constant, blameless, pure;
A life as long as fair; and when expir'd,
A glorious death, unfear'd, as undesir'd.

GEORGE HERBERT.

BORN 1593; DIED 1632.

HERBERT appears to have been as fine an example as any age has produced, of the poet, the scholar, and the gentleman, all harmonized and exalted in the character of the earnest and reflecting Christian. His poems are, perhaps, among uninspired compositions, the most valuable of recorded experiences in religion; and it is impossible to reflect upon their popularity, during a great part of the century in which they were first published, without rejoicing that there should have been so large a portion of the best-educated of the community, who made serious and sustained endeavours to grow in grace, and who felt the worth of such a guide and companion through the wilderness of life. It is a painful fact, that a work once so generally esteemed, so abundant and so true in its descriptions of the effects of genuine religion, and evincing so thorough an acquaintance with its power upon the soul, should now be known to few besides the curious literary enquirer. May the reader become embued, by frequent tasting, with a sincere relish for the feast of devout thoughts—a feast here and there, indeed, fantastically garnished, but always wholesome, and served with elegance—which is set before him in these pages of the meek and pious Herbert!

GEORGE HERBERT.

PUBLIC WORSHIP.

RESTORE to God his due in tithe and time;
A tithe purloin'd, cankers the whole estate.
Sundays observe: think when the bells do chime,
'Tis angels' music; therefore come not late.
God then deals blessings; if a king did so,
Who would not haste, nay give, to see the show?

Twice on the day his due is understood,
For all the week thy food so oft he gave thee.
Thy cheer is mended; bate not of the food,
Because 'tis better, and perhaps may save thee.
Thwart not th' Almighty God; O be not cross.
Fast when thou wilt, but then 'tis gain, not loss.

Though private prayer be a brave design,
Yet public hath more promises, more love;
And love's a weight to hearts, to eyes a sign.
We all are but cold suitors; let us move
Where it is warmest. Leave thy six and seven;
Pray with the most; for where most pray, is heav'n.

When once thy foot enters the church, be bare.
God is more there than thou: for thou art there
Only by his permission. Then beware,
And make thyself all reverence and fear.
Kneeling ne'er spoil'd silk stocking: quit thy state:
All equal are within the church's gate.

Resort to sermons, but to prayers most:
Praying's the end of preaching. O be drest;
Stay not for the other pin. Why, thou hast lost
A joy for it worth worlds. Thus hell doth jest
Away thy blessings, and extremely flout thee,
Thy clothes being fast, but thy soul loose about thee.

In time of service seal up both thine eyes,
And send them to thy heart; that, spying sin,
They may weep out the stains by them did rise.
Those doors being shut, all by the ear comes in.
Who marks in church-time others' symmetry,
Makes all their beauty his deformity.

Let vain or busy thoughts have there no part;
Bring not thy plough, thy plots, thy pleasure thither.
Christ purg'd his temple; so must thou thy heart.
All worldly thoughts are but thieves met together
To cozen thee. Look to thy action well,
For churches either are our heaven or hell.

Judge not the preacher, for he is thy judge:
If thou mislike him, thou conceiv'st him not.
God calleth preaching folly. Do not grudge
To pick out treasures from an earthen pot.

The worst speak something good: if all want sense,
God takes a text, and preacheth patience.

He that gets patience, and the blessing which
Preachers conclude with, hath not lost his pains.
He that by being at church, escapes the ditch,
Which he might fall in by companions, gains.
He that loves God's abode, and to combine
With saints on earth, shall one day with them shine.

Jest not at preachers' language or expression:
How know'st thou but thy sins made him miscarry?
Then turn thy faults and his into confession:
God sent him whatsoe'er he be: O tarry,
And love him for his Master: his condition,
Though it be ill, makes him no ill physician.

None shall in hell such bitter pangs endure,
As those who mock at God's way of salvation.
Whom oil and balsams kill, what salve can cure?
They drink with greediness a full damnation.
The Jews refused thunder; and we folly.
Though God do hedge us in, yet who is holy?

THE REPRISAL.

I HAVE consider'd it, and find
There is no dealing with thy mighty passion;
For though I die for thee, I am behind;
My sins deserve the condemnation.

O make me innocent, that I
May give a disentangled state and free;
And yet thy wounds still my attempts defy,
For by thy death I die for thee.

Ah! was it not enough that thou
By thy eternal glory didst outgo me?
Couldst thou not grief's sad conquest me allow,
But in all victories overthrow me?

Yet by confession will I come
Into the conquest. Though I can do nought
Against thee, in thee I will overcome
The man, who once against thee fought.

GOOD FRIDAY.

O MY chief good,
How shall I measure out thy blood?
How shall I count what thee befel,
And each grief tell?

Shall I thy woes
Number according to thy foes?
Or, since one star show'd thy first breath,
Shall all thy death?

Or shall each leaf,
Which falls in autumn, score a grief?
Or cannot leaves, but fruit, be sign
Of the true vine?

Then let each hour
Of my whole life one grief devour;

That thy distress through all may run,
And be my sun:

Or rather let
My sev'ral sins their sorrows get;
That as each beast his cure doth know,
Each sin may so.

EASTER.

I GOT me flowers to strew thy way;
I got me boughs off many a tree:
But thou wast up by break of day,
And brought'st thy sweets along with thee.

The sun arising in the east,—
Though he give light, and the east perfume;
If they should offer to contest
With thy arising, they presume.

Can there be any day but this,
Though many suns to shine endeavour?
We count three hundred, but we miss:
There is but one, and that one ever.

HOLY BAPTISM.

SINCE, Lord, to thee
A narrow way and little gate
Is all the passage, on my infancy
Thou didst lay hold, and antedate
My faith in me.

O let me still
Write thee great God, and me a child:
Let me be soft and supple to thy will,
Small to myself, to others mild,
Be-hither ill.

Although by stealth
My flesh got on; yet let her sister,
My soul, bid nothing, but preserve her wealth:
The growth of flesh is but a blister;
Childhood is health.

SIN.

Lord, with what care hast thou begirt us round!
Parents first season us; then schoolmasters
Deliver us to laws; they send us bound
To rules of reason, holy messengers—

Pulpits and Sundays; sorrow, dogging sin;
Afflictions sorted; anguish of all sizes;
Fine nets and stratagems to catch us in;
Bibles laid open; millions of surprises;

Blessings beforehand; ties of gratefulness;
The sound of glory ringing in our ears:
Without, our shame; within, our consciences:
Angels and grace, eternal hopes and fears:—

Yet all these fences and their whole array
One cunning bosom-sin blows quite away.

FAITH.

LORD, how couldst thou so much appease
Thy wrath for sin, as, when man's sight was dim,
And could see little, to regard his ease,
And bring by faith all things to him?

Hungry I was, and had no meat,
I did conceit a most delicious feast;
I had it straight, and did as truly eat,
As ever did a welcome guest.

There is a rare outlandish root,
Which when I could not get, I thought it here:
That apprehension cur'd so well my foot,
That I can walk to heav'n well near.

I owed thousands, and much more:
I did believe that I did nothing owe,
And liv'd accordingly; my creditor
Believes so too, and lets me go.

Faith makes me any thing, or all,
That I believe is in the sacred story:
And when sin placeth me in Adam's fall,
Faith sets me higher in his glory.

If I go lower in the book,
What can be lower than the common manger?
Faith puts me there with him, who sweetly took
Our flesh and frailty, death and danger.

If bliss had lien in art or strength,
None but the wise and strong had gained it:

Where now, by faith, all arms are of a length;
One size doth all conditions fit.

A peasant may believe as much
As a great clerk, and reach the highest stature.
Thus dost thou make proud knowledge bend and crouch,
While grace fills up uneven nature.

When creatures had no real light
Inherent in them, thou didst make the sun
Impute a lustre, and allow them bright;
And in this show what Christ hath done.

That which before was darken'd clean,
With bushy groves, pricking the looker's eye,
Vanish'd away, when faith did change the scene;
And then appear'd a glorious sky.

What though my body run to dust?
Faith cleaves unto it, counting ev'ry grain,
With an exact and most particular trust,
Reserving all for flesh again.

THE TEMPER.

How should I praise thee, Lord! how should my rhymes
Gladly engrave thy love in steel,
If what my soul doth feel sometimes,
My soul might ever feel!

Although there were some forty heav'ns, or more,
Sometimes I peer above them all;

Sometimes I hardly reach a score;
Sometimes to hell I fall.

O rack me not to such a vast extent;
Those distances belong to thee:
The world's too little for thy tent,
A grave too big for me.

Wilt thou meet arms with man, that thou dost stretch
A crumb of dust from heav'n to hell?
Will great God measure with a wretch?
Shall he thy stature spell?

O let me, when thy roof my soul hath hid,
O let me roost and nestle there:
Then of a sinner thou art rid,
And I of hope and fear.

Yet take thy way; for sure thy way is best:
Stretch or contract me, thy poor debtor:
This is but tuning of my breast,
To make the music better.

Whether I fly with angels, fall with dust,
Thy hands made both, and I am there.
Thy power and love, my love and trust
Make one place everywhere.

EMPLOYMENT.

If as a flower doth spread and die,
Thou wouldst extend me to some good,

Before I were by frost's extremity
Nipt in the bud,—

The sweetness and the praise were thine;
But the extension and the room,
Which in thy garland I should fill, were mine
At thy great doom.

For as thou dost impart thy grace,
The greater shall our glory be.
The measure of our joys is in this place,
The stuff with thee.

Let me not languish then, and spend
A life as barren to thy praise
As is the dust, to which that life doth tend,
But with delays.

All things are busy; only I
Neither bring honey with the bees,
Nor flowers to make that, nor the husbandry
To water these.

I am no link of thy great chain,
But all my company is as a weed.
Lord, place me in thy concert, give one strain
To my poor reed.

THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

I.

Oh Book! infinite sweetness! let my heart
Suck every letter, and a honey gain

Precious for any grief in any part,
To clear the breast, to mollify all pain.

Thou art all health, health thriving till it make
A full eternity: thou art a mass
Of strange delights, where we may wish and take.
Ladies, look here; this is the thankful glass

That mends the looker's eyes: this is the well
That washes what it shows. Who can endear
Thy praise too much? thou art heaven's lieger here,
Working against the states of death and hell.

Thou art joy's handsel: heaven lies flat in thee,
Subject to every mounter's bended knee.

II.

Oh that I knew how all thy lights combine,
And the configurations of their glory!
Seeing not only how each verse doth shine,
But all the constellations of the story.

This verse marks that, and both do make a motion
Unto a third, that ten leaves off doth lie.
Then, as dispersed herbs do watch a potion,
These three make up some Christian's destiny.

Such are thy secrets, which my life makes good,
And comments on thee: for in ev'ry thing
Thy words do find me out, and parallels bring,
And in another make me understood.

Stars are poor books, and oftentimes do miss:
This book of stars lights to eternal bliss.

GRACE.

My stock lies dead, and no increase
Doth my dull husbandry improve:
O let thy graces without cease
Drop from above.

If still the sun should hide his face,
Thy house would but a dungeon prove;
Thy works, night's captives: O let grace
Drop from above.

The dew 'doth ev'ry morning fall:
And shall the dew outstrip thy Dove?
The dew, for which grass cannot call,
Drop from above?

Death is still working like a mole,
And digs my grave at each remove:
Let grace work too, and on my soul
Drop from above.

Sin is still hammering my heart,
Unto a hardness void of love:
Let suppling grace to cross his art,
Drop from above.

O come! for thou dost know the way:
Or if to me thou wilt not move,
Remove me where I need not say,
'Drop from above.'

CHURCH MUSIC.

SWEETEST of sweets, I thank you; when displeasure
Did through my body wound my mind,
You took me thence, and in your house of pleasure
A dainty lodging me assign'd.

Now I in you without a body move,
Rising and falling with your wings:
We both together sweetly live and love,
Yet say sometimes, 'God help poor kings!'

Comfort, I'll die; for if you post from me,
Sure I shall do so, and much more:
But if I travel in your company,
You know the way to Heaven's door.

THE WINDOWS.

LORD, how can man preach thy eternal Word?
He is a brittle crazy glass:
Yet in thy temple thou dost him afford,
This glorious and transcendent place,
To be a window, through thy grace.

But when thou dost anneal in glass thy story,
Making thy life to shine within
The holy preachers; then the light and glory
More rev'rend grows, and more doth win,—
Which else shows wat'rish, bleak, and thin.

Doctrine and life, colours and light, in one
When they combine and mingle, bring
A strong regard and awe: but speech alone
Doth vanish like a flaring thing,
And in the ear, not conscience, ring.

CONSTANCY.

Who is the honest man?—
He that doth still, and strongly, good pursue,
To God, his neighbour, and himself most true:
Whom neither force nor fawning can
Unpin, or wrench from giving all their due:

Whose honesty is not
So loose or easy, that a ruffling wind
Can blow away, or glitt'ring look it blind:
Who rides his sure and even trot,
While the world now rides by, now lags behind:

Who, when great trials come,
Nor seeks, nor shuns them; but doth calmly stay,
Till he the thing and the example weigh:
All being brought into a sum,
What place or person calls for, he doth pay:

Whom none can work, or woo,
To use in any thing a trick or slight;
For above all things he abhors deceit;
His words and works, and fashion too,
All of a piece, and all are clear and straight:

Who never melts or thaws
At close temptations: when the day is done,
His goodness sets not, but in dark can run:
The sun to others writeth laws,
And is their virtue—Virtue is his sun:

Who, when he is to treat
With sick folks, women, those whom passions sway,
Allows for that, and keeps his constant way:
Whom others' faults do not defeat;
But though men fail him, yet his part doth play:

Whom nothing can procure,
When the wide world runs bias, from his will
To writhe his limbs, and share, not mend the ill.—
This is the mark-man, safe and sure,
Who still is right, and prays to be so still.

AFFLICTION.

My heart did heave, and there came forth, 'O God!'
By that I knew that thou wast in the grief,
To guide and govern it to my relief,
Making a sceptre of the rod:
Hadst thou not had thy part,
Sure the unruly sigh had broke my heart.

But since thy breath gave me both life and shape,
Thou know'st my tallies; and when there's assign'd
So much breath to a sigh, what's then behind?
Or if some years with it escape,
The sigh then only is
A gale to bring me sooner to my bliss.

Thy life on earth was grief, and thou art still
Constant unto it, making it to be
A point of honour, now to grieve in me,
And in thy members suffer ill.
They who lament one cross,
Thou dying daily, praise thee to thy loss.

SUNDAY.

O DAY most calm, most bright,
The fruit of this, the next world's bud,
The indorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a Friend, and with his blood;
The couch of time, care's balm and bay:—
The week were dark, but for thy light;
Thy torch doth show the way.

The other days and thou
Make up one man; whose face *thou* art,
Knocking at heav'n with thy brow:
The workydays are the back-part;
The burden of the week lies there,
Making the whole to stoop and bow,
Till thy release appear.

Man had straight forward gone
To endless death: but thou dost pull
And turn us round, to look on one,
Whom, if we were not very dull,
We could not choose but look on still;
Since there is no place so alone,
The which he doth not fill.

Sundays the pillars are,
On which heaven's palace arched lies:
The other days fill up the spare
And hollow room with vanities.
They are the fruitful beds and borders
In God's rich garden: that is bare,
Which parts their ranks and orders.

The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal glorious King.
On Sunday heaven's gate stands ope;
Blessings are plentiful and rife—
More plentiful than hope.

This day my Saviour rose,
And did enclose this light for his;
That, as each beast his manger knows,
Man might not of his fodder miss.
Christ hath took in this piece of ground,
And made a garden there for those
Who want herbs for their wound.

The rest of our creation
Our great Redeemer did remove
With the same shake, which at his passion
Did the earth and all things with it move.
As Sampson bore the doors away,
Christ's hands, tho' nail'd, wrought our salvation,
And did unhinge that day.

The brightness of that day
We sullied by our foul offence:
Wherefore that robe we cast away,

Having a new at his expense,
Whose drops of blood paid the full price,
That was requir'd to make us gay,
And fit for paradise.

Thou art a day of mirth:
And where the week-days trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth:
O let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from seven to seven,
Till that we both, being toss'd from earth,
Fly hand in hand to heav'n!

TO ALL ANGELS AND SAINTS.

Oh glorious spirits, who after all your bands,
See the smooth face of God, without a frown,
Or strict commands;
Where ev'ry one is king, and hath his crown,—
If not upon his head, yet in his hands:

Not out of envy or maliciousness
Do I forbear to crave your special aid.
I would address
My vows to thee most gladly, blessed maid,
And mother of my God, in my distress.

Thou art the holy mine, whence came the gold,
The great restorative for all decay
In young and old;
Thou art the cabinet where the jewel lay:—
Chiefly to thee would I my soul unfold.

But now, alas! I dare not; for our King,
Whom we do all jointly adore and praise,
Bids no such thing:
And where his pleasure no injunction lays,
('Tis your own case) ye never move a wing.

All worship is prerogative, and a flower,
Of his rich crown, from whom lies no appeal
At the last hour:
Therefore we dare not from his garland steal,
To make a posy for inferior power.

Although then others court you, if ye know
What's done on earth, we shall not fare the worse,
Who do not so;
Since we are ever ready to disburse,
If any one our Master's hand can show.

EMPLOYMENT.

He that is weary, let him sit:
My soul would stir
And trade in courtesies and wit,
Quitting the fur,
To cold complexions needing it.

Man is no star, but a quick coal
Of mortal fire:
Who blows it not, nor doth control
A faint desire,
Lets his own ashes choke his soul.

When the elements did for place contest
With him whose will

Ordain'd the highest to be best,
The earth sat still,
And by the others is opprest.

Life is a business, not good cheer;
Ever in wars.
The sun still shineth there or here,
Whereas the stars
Watch an advantage to appear.

Oh that I were an orange-tree,
That busy plant!
Then should I ever laden be,
And never want
Some fruit for him that dresseth me.

But we are still too young or old;
The man is gone,
Before we do our wares unfold:
So we freeze on,
Until the grave increase our cold.

CHRISTMAS.

The shepherds sing, and shall I silent be?
My God, no hymn for thee?
My soul's a shepherd too; a flock it feeds
Of thoughts, and words, and deeds.
The pasture is thy word; the streams thy grace
Enriching all the place.
Shepherd and flock shall sing, and all my powers
Out-sing the day-light hours.

Then we will chide the sun, for letting night
Take up his place and right:
We sing one common Lord; wherefore he should
Himself the candle hold.
I will go searching, till I find a sun
Shall stay till we have done;
A willing shiner, that shall shine as gladly,
As frost-nipt suns look sadly.
Then we will sing, and shine all our own day,
And one another pay:
His beams shall cheer my breast, and both so twine,
Till ev'n his beams sing, and my music shine.

THE WORLD.

Love built a stately house; where Fortune came:
And spinning fancies, she was heard to say,
That her fine cobwebs did support the frame;
Whereas they were supported by the same:
But Wisdom quickly swept them all away.

Then Pleasure came, who, liking not the fashion,
Began to make balconies, terraces,
Till she had weakened all by alteration:
But rev'rend laws, and many a proclamation
Reformed all at length with menaces.

Then enter'd Sin, and with that sycamore,
Whose leaves first sheltered man from drought and dew,
Working and winding slily evermore,
The inward walls and summers[1] cleft and tore:
But Grace shor'd these, and cut that as it grew.

[1] Principal beams.

Then Sin combin'd with Death in a firm band,
To rase the building to the very floor;
Which they effected—none could them withstand;
But Love and Grace took Glory by the hand,
And built a braver palace than before.

VANITY.

The fleet astronomer can bore,
And thread the spheres with his quick-piercing mind:
He views their stations, walks from door to door,
Surveys, as if he had design'd
To make a purchase there: he sees their dances;
And knoweth, long before,
Both their full-eyed aspects, and secret glances.

The nimble diver with his side
Cuts through the working waves, that he may fetch
His dearly-earned pearl, which God did hide
On purpose from the venturous wretch;
That he might save his life, and also hers,
Who with excessive pride
Her own destruction and his dangers wears.

The subtle chymic can divest
And strip the creature naked, till he find
The callow principles within their nest:
There he imparts them to his mind,
Admitted to their bed-chamber, before
They appear trim and drest
To ordinary suitors at the door.

What hath not man sought out and found,
But his dear God? who yet his glorious law
Embosoms in us, mellowing the ground
With showers and frost, with love and awe;
So that we need not say, Where's this command?—
Poor man! thou searchest round
To find out Death, but missest Life at hand.

VIRTUE.

Sweet day! so cool, so calm, so bright,
The bridal of the earth and sky,
The dew shall weep thy fall to-night;
For thou must die.

Sweet rose! whose hue, angry and brave,
Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye,
Thy root is ever in its grave;
And thou must die.

Sweet spring! full of sweet days and roses,
A box where sweets compacted lie,—
My music shows ye have your closes,
And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,
Like season'd timber, never gives;
But though the whole world turn to a coal,
Then chiefly lives.

THE PEARL.—Matt. xiii.

I know the ways of learning; both the head
And pipes that feed the press, and make it run;
What reason hath from nature borrowed,
Or of itself, like a good housewife, spun
In laws and policy; what the stars conspire;
What willing nature speaks, what forc'd by fire;
Both th' old discoveries, and the new-found seas;
The stock and surplus, cause and history:
All these stand open, or I have the keys:—
Yet I love thee.

I know the ways of honour, what maintains
The quick returns of courtesy and wit:
In vies of favours whether party gains,
When glory swells the heart, and mouldeth it
To all expressions both of hand and eye,
Which on the world a true-love-knot may tie,
And bear the bundle, wheresoe'er it goes:
How many drams of spirits there must be
To sell my life unto my friends or foes:—
Yet I love thee.

I know the ways of pleasure, the sweet strains,
The lullings and the relishes of it;
The propositions of hot blood and brains;
What mirth and music mean; what love and wit
Have done these twenty hundred years, and more:
I know the projects of unbridled store:
My stuff is flesh, not brass; my senses live,
And grumble oft, that they have more in me
Than he that curbs them, being but one to five:—
Yet I love thee.

I know all these, and have them in my hand.
Therefore not sealed, but with open eyes
I fly to thee, and fully understand
Both the main sale, and the commodities;
And at what rate and price I have thy love;
With all the circumstances that may move.—
Yet through the labyrinths, not my grovelling wit,
But thy silk-twist let down from heav'n to me,
Did both conduct and teach me, how by it
To climb to thee.

MAN.

My God, I heard this day,
That none doth build a stately habitation,
But he that means to dwell therein.
What house more stately hath there been,
Or can be, than is man? to whose creation
All things are in decay.

For man is ev'ry thing,
And more: he is a tree, yet bears no fruit;
A beast, yet is, or should be more.
Reason and speech we only bring.
Parrots may thank us, if they are not mute;
They go upon the score.

Man is all symmetry,
Full of proportions, one limb to another,
And all to all the world besides:
Each part may call the furthest brother:
For head with foot hath private amity,
And both with moons and tides.

Nothing hath got so far,
But man hath caught and kept it, as his prey.
His eyes dismount the highest star:
He is in little all the sphere:
Herbs gladly cure our flesh, because that they
Find their acquaintance there.

For us the winds do blow;
The earth doth rest, heav'n move, and fountains flow.
Nothing we see, but means our good,
As our delight, or as our treasure:
The whole is either our cupboard of food,
Or cabinet of pleasure.

The stars have us to bed;
Night draws the curtain, which the sun withdraws:
Music and light attend our head.
All things unto our flesh are kind
In their descent and being; to our mind
In their ascent and cause.

Each thing is full of duty:
Waters united are our navigation;
Distinguished, our habitation;
Below, our drink; above, our meat:
Both are our cleanliness. Hath one such beauty?
Then how are all things neat!

More servants wait on man,
Than he'll take notice of: in every path
He treads down that which doth befriend him,
When sickness makes him pale and wan.
Oh mighty love! Man is one world, and hath
Another to attend him.

Since then, my God, thou hast
So brave a palace built; O dwell in it,
That it may dwell with thee at last!
'Till then afford us so much wit,
That, as the world serves us, we may serve thee,
And both thy servants be.

UNKINDNESS.

LORD, make me tender to offend:
In friendship, first I think, if that agree,
Which I intend,
Unto my friend's intent and end.—
I would not use a friend as I use thee.

If any touch my friend, or his good name,
It is my honour and my love to free
His blasted fame
From the least spot or thought of blame.—
I could not use a friend as I use thee.

My friend may spit upon my curious floor:
Would he have gold? I lend it instantly;
But let the poor,
And thou within them, starve at door.—
I cannot use a friend as I use thee.

When that my friend pretendeth to a place,
I quit my interest, and leave it free;
But when thy grace
Sues for my heart, I thee displace;
Nor would I use a friend as I use thee.

Yet, can a friend, what thou hast done, fulfil?
O write in brass, "My God upon a tree
His blood did spill,
Only to purchase my good will;—
Yet use I not my foes as I use thee."

LIFE.

I MADE a posy, while the day ran by:
"Here will I smell my remnant out, and tie
My life within this band."
But time did beckon to the flowers, and they
By noon most cunningly did steal away,
And wither'd in my hand.

My hand was next to them, and then my heart;
I took, without more thinking, in good part
Time's gentle admonition;
Who did so sweetly death's sad taste convey,
Making my mind to smell my fatal day,
Yet sugaring the suspicion.

Farewell, dear flowers; sweetly your time ye spent,
Fit, while ye liv'd, for smell or ornament;
And after death for cures.
I follow straight, without complaints or grief;
Since, if my scent be good, I care not if
It be as short as yours.

MORTIFICATION.

How soon doth man decay!—
When clothes are taken from a chest of sweets
To swaddle infants, whose young breath
Scarce knows the way:
They are like little winding-sheets,
Which do consign and send them unto death.

When boys go first to bed,
They step into their voluntary graves;
Sleep binds them fast; only their breath
Makes them not dead:
Successive nights, like rolling waves,
Convey them quickly, who are bound for death.

When youth is frank and free,
And calls for music, while his veins do swell,
All day exchanging mirth and breath
In company;
That music summons to the knell,
Which shall befriend him at the house of death.

When man grows staid and wise,
Getting a house and home, where he may move
Within the circle of his breath,
Schooling his eyes;
That dumb inclosure maketh love
Unto the coffin, that attends his death.

When age grows low and weak,
Marking his grave, and thawing ev'ry year,
Till all do melt, and drown his breath

When he would speak;
A chair or litter shows the bier,
Which shall convey him to the house of death.

Man, ere he is aware,
Hath put together a solemnity,
And dress'd his hearse, while he hath breath
As yet to spare.
Yet, Lord, instruct us so to die,
That all these dyings may be life in death.

MISERY.

Lord, let the angels praise thy name.
Man is a foolish thing—a foolish thing;
Folly and sin play all his game.
His house still burns; and yet he still doth sing,
"Man is but glass,
He knows it, fill the glass."

How canst thou brook his foolishness?
Nay, he'll not lose a cup of drink for thee:
Bid him but temper his excess;
Not he; he knows where he can better be,
As he will swear,
Than to serve thee in fear.

What strange pollutions doth he wed,
And make his own, as if none knew but he!
No man shall beat into his head,
That thou within his curtains drawn canst see:
They are of cloth,
Where never yet came moth.

The best of men, turn but thy hand
For one poor minute, stumble at a pin:
They would not have their actions scann'd,
Nor any sorrow tell them that they sin,
Though it be small,
And measure not their fall.

They quarrel thee, and would give over
The bargain made to serve thee: but thy love
Holds them unto it, and doth cover
Their follies with the wing of thy mild dove,
Not suff'ring those
Who would, to be thy foes.

My God, man cannot praise thy name:
Thou art all brightness, perfect purity:
The sun holds down his head for shame,
Dead with eclipses, when we speak of thee.
How shall infection
Presume on thy perfection?

As dirty hands foul all they touch,
And those things most, which are most pure and fine;
So our clay-hearts, e'en when we crouch
To sing thy praises, make them less divine.
Yet either this,
Or none thy portion is.

Man cannot serve thee; let him go
And serve the swine; there, there is his delight:
He doth not like this virtue, no—
Give him his dirt to wallow in all night:
These preachers make
His head to shoot and ache

Oh foolish man, where are thine eyes?
How hast thou lost them in a crowd of cares?
Thou pull'st the rug, and wilt not rise,
No, not to purchase the whole pack of stars:
There let them shine,
Thou must go sleep—or dine.

The bird that sees a dainty bower
Made in the tree where she was wont to sit,
Wonders and sings—but not his power,
Who made the arbour: this exceeds her wit.
But man doth know
The spring whence all things flow:

And yet, as though he knew it not,
His knowledge winks, and lets his humours reign:
They make his life a constant blot,
And all the blood of God to run in vain.
Ah wretch! what verse
Can thy strange ways rehearse?

Indeed at first man was a treasure,
A box of jewels, shop of rarities,
A ring, whose posy was, "My pleasure:"
He was a garden in a paradise:
Glory and grace
Did crown his heart and face.

But sin hath fool'd him. Now he is
A lump of flesh, without a foot or wing
To raise him to the glimpse of bliss:
A sick toss'd vessel, dashing on each thing;
Nay, his own shelf:—
My God, I mean myself.

PRAYER.

Of what an easy quick access,
My blessed Lord, art thou! how suddenly
May our requests thine ear invade!
To show that state dislikes not easiness,
If I but lift mine eyes, my suit is made:
Thou canst no more not hear, than thou canst die.

Of what supreme almighty power
Is thy great arm, which spans the east and west,
And tacks the centre to the sphere!
By it do all things live their measur'd hour:
We cannot ask the thing which is not there,
Blaming the shallowness of our request.

Of what unmeasurable love
Art thou possess'd, who when thou couldst not die,
Wert fain to take our flesh and curse,
And for our sakes in person sin reprove!
That by destroying that which tied thy purse,
Thou mightst make way for liberality.

Since then these three wait on thy throne,
Ease, Power, and Love; I value prayer so,
That were I to leave all but one,
Wealth, fame, endowments, virtues, all should go:
I, and dear prayer, would together dwell,
And quickly gain, for each inch lost, an ell.

SION.

LORD, with what glory wast thou serv'd of old,
When Solomon's temple stood and flourished!
Where most things were of purest gold;
The wood was all embellished
With flowers and carvings, mystical and rare:
All show'd the builder's, craved the seer's care.

Yet all this glory, all this pomp and state
Did not affect thee much, was not thy aim;
Something there was that sow'd debate:
Wherefore thou quitt'st thy ancient claim:
And now thy architecture meets with sin;
For all thy frame and fabric is within.

There thou art struggling with a peevish heart,
Which sometimes crosseth thee, thou sometimes it:
The fight is hard, on either part.
Great God doth fight, he doth submit.
All Solomon's sea of brass and world of stone
Is not so dear to thee as one good groan.

And truly brass and stones are heavy things:
Tombs for the dead, not temples fit for thee:
But groans are quick and full of wings,
And all their motions upward be;
And ever as they mount, like larks they sing:
The note is sad, yet music for a king.

THE BRITISH CHURCH.

I JOY, dear mother, when I view
Thy perfect lineaments and hue,
Both sweet and bright.

Beauty in thee takes up her place,
And dates her letters from thy face,
When she doth write.

A fine aspect in fit array,
Neither too mean, nor yet too gay,
Shows who is best.

Outlandish looks may not compare,
For all they either painted are,
Or else undress'd.

She on the hills, which wantonly
Allureth all, in hope to be
By her preferr'd,

Hath kiss'd so long her painted shrines,
That ev'n her face by kissing shines,
For her reward.

She in the valley is so shy
Of dressing, that her hair doth lie
About her ears:

While she avoids her neighbour's pride,
She wholly goes on the other side
And nothing wears.

But, dearest mother, (what those miss)
The mean thy praise and glory is;—
And long may be!

Blessed be God whose love it was
To double-moat thee with his grace,
And none but thee.

THE QUIP.

The merry world did, on a day,
With his train-bands and mates agree
To meet together, where I lay;
And all in sport to jeer at me.

First, Beauty crept into a rose;
Which, when I pluck'd not, "Sir," said she,
"Tell me, I pray, whose hands are those?"
—But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then Money came; and, chinking still,
"What tune is this, poor man?" said he:
"I heard in music you had skill."
—But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came brave Glory puffing by,
In silks, that whistled, "Who but he?"
He scarce allow'd me half an eye.
—But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Then came quick Wit and Conversation;
And he would needs a comfort be,
And, to be short, make an oration.
—But thou shalt answer, Lord, for me.

Yet when the hour of thy design
To answer these fine things shall come;
Speak not at large; say, I am thine.
And then they have their answer home.

VANITY.

O HEAR betimes, lest thy relenting
May come too late!
To purchase heaven for repenting,
Is no hard rate.
If souls be made of earthly mold,
Let them love gold;

If born on high,
Let them unto their kindred fly:
For they can never be at rest,
Till they regain their ancient nest.
Then, silly soul, take heed; for earthly joy
Is but a bubble, and makes thee a boy.

BUSINESS.

CANST be idle, can'st thou play,
Foolish soul, who sin'd to-day?

Rivers run, and springs each one
Know their home, and get them gone:
Hast thou tears, or hast thou none?

If, poor soul, thou hast no tears,
Would thou hadst no fault or fears!
Who hath these, those ills forbears.

Winds still work; it is their plot,
Be the season cold or hot:
Hast thou sighs, or hast thou not?

If thou hast no sighs or groans,
Would thou hadst no flesh and bones!
Lesser pains 'scape greater ones.

But if yet thou idle be,
Foolish soul, who died for thee?

Who did leave his Father's throne,
To assume thy flesh and bone?
Had he life, or had he none?

If he had not liv'd for thee,
Thou hadst died most wretchedly;
And two deaths had been thy fee.

He so far thy good did plot,
That his own self he forgot.
Did he die, or did he not?

If he had not died for thee,
Thou hadst liv'd in misery;
Two lives worse than ten deaths be.

And hath any space of breath
Twixt his sins and Saviour's death?

He that loseth gold, though dross,

Tells to all he meets, his cross:
He that hath sins, hath he no loss?

He that finds a silver vein,
Thinks on it, and thinks again;
Brings thy Saviour's death no gain?

Who in heart not ever kneels,
Neither sin nor Saviour feels.

DULNESS.

Why do I languish thus, drooping and dull,
As if I were all earth?
O give me quickness, that I may with mirth
Praise thee brimfull!

The wanton lover in a curious strain
Can praise his fairest fair;
And with quaint metaphors her curled hair
Curl o'er again:

Thou art my loveliness, my life, my light,
Beauty alone to me:
Thy bloody death, and undeserv'd, makes thee
Pure red and white.

When all perfections as but one appear,
That—those thy form doth show,
The very dust, where thou dost tread and go,
Makes beauties here.

Where are my lines, then? my approaches? views?
Where are my window-songs?
Lovers are still pretending, and ev'n wrongs
Sharpen their Muse.

But I am lost in flesh, whose sugar'd lies
Still mock me, and grow bold:
Sure thou didst put a mind there if I could
Find where it lies.

Lord, clear thy gift, that with a constant wit
I may but look towards thee:—
Look only: for to love thee, who can be,
What angel, fit?

PROVIDENCE.

O SACRED Providence, who from end to end
Strongly and sweetly movest! shall I write,
And not of thee, through whom my fingers bend
To hold my quill? Shall they not do thee right?

Of all the creatures both in sea and land
Only to man thou hast made known thy ways,
And put the pen alone into his hand,
And made him secretary of thy praise.

Beasts fain would sing; birds ditty to their notes;
Trees would be tuning on their native lute
To thy renown: but all their hands and throats
Are brought to man, while they are lame and mute.

Man is the world's high-priest; he doth present
The sacrifice for all; while they below
Unto the service mutter an assent,—
Such as springs use that fall, and winds that blow.

He that to praise and laud thee doth refrain
Doth not refrain unto himself alone,
But robs a thousand, who would praise thee fain;
And doth commit a world of sin in one.

Wherefore, most sacred Spirit, I here present,
For me and all my fellows, praise to thee:
And just it is that I should pay the rent,
Because the benefit accrues to me.

We all acknowledge both thy power and love
To be exact, transcendent and divine;
Who dost so strongly and so sweetly move,
While all things have their will, yet none but thine.

For either thy command or thy permission
Lay hands on all; they are thy right and left;
The first puts on with speed an expedition;
The other curbs sin's stealing pace and theft:

Nothing escapes them both; all must appear,
And be dispos'd, and dress'd, and tun'd by thee,
Who sweetly temper'st all. If we could hear
Thy skill and art, what music would it be!

Thou art in small things great, not small in any;
Thy even praise can neither rise nor fall.
Thou art in all things one, in each thing many:
For thou art infinite in one, and all.

Tempests are calm to thee, they know thy hand,
And hold it fast, as children do their fathers,
Which cry and follow. Thou hast made poor sand
Check the proud sea, even when it swells and gathers.

Thy cupboard serves the world; the meat is set,
Where all may reach; no beast but knows his feed.
Birds teach us hawking; fishes have their net:
The great prey on the less, they on some weed.

Nothing engend'red doth prevent his meat;
Flies have their tables spread, e're they appear;
Some creatures have in winter what to eat;
Others do sleep, and envy not their cheer.

How finely dost thou times and seasons spin,
And make a twist checker'd with night and day!
Which as it lengthens, winds, and winds us in,
As bowls go on, but turning all the way.

Each creature hath a wisdom for his good.
The pigeons feed their tender offspring, crying,
When they are callow; but withdraw their food,
When they are fledged, that need may teach 'em flying.

Bees work for man; and yet they never bruise
Their master's flow'r, but leave it, having done,
As fair as ever, and as fit to use:
So both the flow'r doth stay, and honey run.

Sheep eat the grass, and dung the ground for more:
Trees after bearing drop their leaves for soil:
Springs vent their streams, and by expense get store:
Clouds cool by heat, and baths by cooling boil.

Who hath the virtue to express the rare
And curious virtues both of herbs and stones?
Is there an herb for that? O that thy care
Would show a root that gives expressions!

And if an herb hath power, what have the stars!
A rose, besides his beauty, is a cure.
Doubtless our plagues and plenty, peace and wars
Are there much surer than our art is sure.

Thou hast hid metals: man may take them thence,
But at his peril; when he digs the place,
He makes a grave; as if the thing had sense,
And threatened man, that he should fill the space.

Ev'n poisons praise thee. Should a thing be lost?
Should creatures want, for want of heed, their due?
Since where are poisons, antidotes are most;
The help stands close, and keeps the fear in view.

The sea, which seems to stop the traveller,
Is by a ship the speedier passage made.
The winds, who think they rule the mariner,
Are rul'd by him, and taught to serve his trade.

And as thy house is full, so I adore
Thy curious art in marshalling thy goods.
The hills with health abound, the vales with store;
The south, with marble; north, with furs and woods.

Hard things are glorious; easy things, good cheap;
The common all men have; that which is rare,
Men therefore seek to have and care to keep.
The healthy frosts with summer fruits compare.

Light without wind is glass; warm without weight
Is wool and furs; cool without coldness, shade;
Speed without pains, a horse; tall without height,
A servile hawk; low without loss, a spade.

All countries have enough to serve their need:
If they seek fine things, thou dost make them run
For their offence; and then dost turn their speed
To be commerce and trade from sun to sun.

Nothing wears clothes but man; nothing doth need
But he to wear them. Nothing useth fire,
But man alone to show his heavenly breed:
And only he hath fuel in desire.

When the earth was dry, thou mad'st a sea of wet;
When that lay gather'd, thou didst broach the mountains;
When yet some places could no moisture get,
The winds grew gard'ners, and the clouds good fountains.

Rain, do not hurt my flowers; but gently spend
Your honey drops; press not to smell them here;

When they are ripe, their odour will ascend,
And at your lodging with their thanks appear.

How harsh are thorns to pears! and yet they make
A better hedge, and need less reparation.
How smooth are silks, compared with a stake,
Or with a stone! yet make no good foundation.

Sometimes thou dost divide thy gifts to man;
Sometimes unite. The Indian nut alone
Is clothing, meat and trencher, drink and can,
Boat, cable, sail and needle, all in one.

Most herbs that grow in brooks are hot and dry;
Cold fruits warm kernels help against the wind:
The lemon's juice and rind cure mutually:
The whey of milk doth loose, the milk doth bind.

To show thou art not bound, as if thy lot
Were worse than ours, sometimes thou shiftest hands.
Most things move th' under jaw; the crocodile not.
Most things sleep lying; the elephant leans or stands.

But who hath praise enough? nay, who hath any?
None can express thy works but he that knows them;
And none can know thy works, which are so many,
And so complete, but only he that owns them.

All things that are, though they have several ways,
Yet in their being join with one advice
To honour thee; and so I give thee praise
In all my other hymns, but in this twice.

Each thing that is, although in use and name
It go for one, hath many ways in store
To honour thee: and so each hymn thy fame
Extolleth many ways; yet this, one more.

GRATEFULNESS.

Thou that hast given so much to me,
Give one thing more, a grateful heart.
See how thy beggar works on thee
By art.

He makes thy gifts occasion more,
And says, If he in this be cross'd,
All thou hast given him heretofore
Is lost.

But thou didst reckon, when at first
Thy word our hearts and hands did crave,
What it would come to at the worst
To save.

Perpetual knockings at thy door;
Tears sullying thy transparent rooms;
Gift upon gift; much would have more,
And comes.

This notwithstanding, thou went'st on,
And didst allow us all our noise:
Nay, thou hast made a sigh and groan
Thy joys.

Not that thou hast not still above
Much better tunes than groans can make;
But that these country-airs thy love
Did take.

Wherefore I cry, and cry again;
And in no quiet canst thou be,
Till I a thankful heart obtain
Of thee:

Not—thankful when it pleaseth *me;*
As if thy blessings had spare days:
But such a heart, whose pulse may be
Thy praise.

PEACE.

SWEET Peace, where dost thou dwell? I humbly crave,
Let me once know.
I sought thee in a secret cave,
And ask'd if Peace were there,
A hollow wind did seem to answer—"No;
Go seek elsewhere."

I did;—and, going, did a rainbow note:
Surely, thought I,
This is the lace of Peace's coat:

I will search out the matter.
But while I look'd the clouds immediately
Did break and scatter.

Then went I to a garden, and did spy
A gallant flower,
The crown imperial. "Sure," said I,
"Peace at the root must dwell."
But when I digg'd, I saw a worm devour
What show'd so well.

At length I met a rev'rend good old man:
Whom when for Peace
I did demand, he thus began:
"There was a Prince of old
At Salem dwelt, who lived with good increase
Of flock and fold.

"He sweetly liv'd; yet sweetness did not save
His life from foes.
But after death out of his grave
There sprang twelve stalks of wheat:
Which many wond'ring at, got some of those
To plant and set.

"It prosper'd strangely, and did soon disperse
Through all the earth:
For they that taste it do rehearse,
That virtues lie therein;
A secret virtue, bringing peace and mirth
By flight of sin.

"Take of this grain, which in my garden grows,
And grows for you:

Make bread of it; and that repose
And peace, which every where
With so much earnestness you do pursue,
Is only there."

MAN'S MEDLEY.

HARK how the birds do sing,
And woods do ring.
All creatures have their joy, and man hath his.
Yet, if we rightly measure,
Man's joy and pleasure
Rather hereafter, than in present, is.

To this life things of sense
Make their pretence:
In the other angels have a right by birth:
Man ties them both alone,
And makes them one,
With one hand touching heav'n, with the other earth.

In soul he mounts and flies,
In flesh he dies:
He wears a stuff, whose thread is coarse and round,
But trimm'd with curious lace,
And should take place
After the trimming, not the stuff and ground.

Not, that he may not here
Taste of the cheer:
But as birds drink, and straight lift up their heads;

So must he sip, and think
Of better drink
He may attain to, after he is dead.

But as his joys are double,
So is his trouble.
He hath two winters, other things but one:
Both frosts and thoughts do nip,
And bite his lip;
And he, of all things, fears two deaths, alone.

Yet ev'n the greatest griefs
May be reliefs,
Could he but take them right, and in their ways.
Happy is he, whose heart
Hath found the art
To turn his double pains to double praise.

THE METHOD.

Poor heart, lament:
For since thy God refuseth still,
There is some rub, some discontent,
Which cools his will.

Thy Father could
Quickly effect what thou dost move;
For he is power: and sure he would;
For he is love.

Go search this thing:
Tumble thy breast, and turn thy book:

If thou hadst lost a glove or ring,
Wouldst thou not look?

What do I see
Written above there? "Yesterday
I did behave me carelessly,
When I did pray."

And should God's ear
To such indifferents chained be,
Who do not their own motions hear?
Is God less free?

But stay! what's there?
"Late, when I would have something done,
I had a motion to forbear;
Yet I went on."

And should God's ear,
Which needs not man, be tied to those
Who hear not him, but quickly hear
His utter foes?

Then once more pray;
Down with thy knees, up with thy voice:
Seek pardon first, and God will say,
"Glad heart, rejoice!"

DIVINITY.

As men for fear the stars should sleep and nod,
  And trip at night, have spheres supplied;
As if a star were duller than a clod,
  Which knows his way without a guide:

Just so the other heav'n they also serve,
  Divinity's transcendent sky:
Which with the edge of wit they cut and carve.
  Reason triumphs, and faith lies by.

Could not that wisdom, which first broach'd the wine,
  Have thicken'd it with definitions?
And jagg'd his seamless coat, had that been fine,
  With curious questions and divisions?

But all the doctrine which he taught and gave,
  Was clear as heav'n from whence it came:
At least, those beams of truth, which only save,
  Surpass in brightness any flame.

'Love God, and love your neighbour;' 'Watch and pray;'
  'Do as you would be done unto:'
O dark instructions, ev'n as dark as day!
  Who can these Gordian knots undo?

But he doth bid us take his blood for wine.
  Bid what he please; yet I am sure,
To take and taste what he doth there design,
  Is all that saves, and not obscure.

Then burn thy epicycles, foolish man;
Break all thy spheres, and save thy head.
Faith needs no staff of flesh, but stoutly can
To heav'n alone both go and lead.

JUSTICE.

O DREADFUL Justice, what a fright and terror,
Wast thou of old,
When sin and error
Did show and shape thy looks to me,
And through their glass discolour thee!
He that did but look up, was proud and bold.

The dishes of thy balance seem'd to gape,
Like two great pits;
The beam and scape
Did like some tort'ring engine show:
Thy hand above did burn and glow,
Daunting the stoutest hearts, the proudest wits.

But now that Christ's pure veil presents the sight,
I see no fears:
Thy hand is white,
Thy scales like buckets, which attend
And interchangeably descend,
Lifting to heaven from this well of tears.

For where before thou didst call on me,
Now I still touch
And harp on thee.
God's promises have made thee mine:
Why should I justice now decline?
Against me there is none, but for me much.

THE PILGRIMAGE.

I TRAVEL on, seeing the hill, where lay
My expectation.
A long it was and weary way.
The gloomy cave of Desperation
I left on th' one, and on the other side
The rock of pride.

And so I came to Fancy's meadow, strow'd
With many a flower:
Fain would I here have made abode,
But I was quicken'd by my hour.
So to Care's copse I came, and there got through
With much ado.

That led me to the wild of Passion; which
Some call the world;
A wasted place, but sometimes rich.
Here I was robb'd of all my gold,
Save one good angel, which a friend had tied
Close to my side.

At length I got unto the gladsome hill,
Where lay my hope,
Where lay my heart; and climbing still,
When I had gain'd the brow and top,
A lake of brackish waters on the ground
Was all I found.

With that abash'd, and struck with many a sting,
Of swarming fears,
I fell, and cried, "Alas, my King!
Can both the way and end be tears?"
Yet taking heart, I rose, and then perceiv'd
I was deceived.

My hill was farther; so I slunk away;
Yet heard a cry
Just as I went, "None goes that way
And lives:" If that be all, said I,
After so foul a journey death is fair,
And but a chair.

THE HOLD-FAST.

I THREATENED to observe the sweet decree
Of my dear God with all my power and might:
But I was told by one it could not be;
Yet I might trust in God to be my light.

'Then will I trust,' said I, 'in him alone.'
Nay, ev'n to trust in him, was also his:
We must confess, that nothing is our own.
'Then I confess that he my succour is.'

But to have nought is ours; not, to confess
That we have nought. I stood amaz'd at this,
Much troubled; till I heard a friend express,
That all things were more ours by being his.
What Adam had, and forfeited for all,
Christ keepeth now who cannot fail or fall.

LONGING.

WITH sick and famish'd eyes,
With doubling knees, and weary bones,
To thee my cries,

To thee my groans,
To thee my sighs, my tears ascend:
No end?

My throat, my soul is hoarse,
My heart is wither'd like a ground
Which thou dost curse.
My thoughts run round,
And make me giddy: Lord, I fall,—
Yet call.

From thee all pity flows.
Mothers are kind, because thou art,
And dost dispose
To them a part:
Their infants them, and they seek thee
More free.

Bowels of pity, hear!
Lord of my soul, love of my mind,
Bown down thine ear!
Let not the wind
Scatter my words, and in the same
Thy name!

Look on my sorrows round!
Mark well my furnace! O what flames,
What heats abound!
What griefs, what shames!
Consider, Lord; Lord, bow thine ear,
And hear!

Lord Jesu, thou didst bow
Thy dying head upon the tree:
O be not now

More dead to me!
Lord, hear! 'Shall he that made the ear
Not hear?'

Behold, thy dust doth stir;
It moves, it creeps, it aims at thee:
Wilt thou defer
To succour me,
Thy pile of dust, wherein each crumb
Says, come?

To thee help appertains.
Hast thou left all things to their course,
And laid the reins
Upon the horse?
Is all lock'd? Hath a sinner's plea
No key?

THE JEWS.

Poor nation, whose sweet sap and juice
Our scions have purloin'd, and left you dry:
Whose streams we got by the apostles' sluice,
And use in baptism, while ye pine and die;
Who by not keeping once, became a debtor;
And now by keeping lose the letter:

Oh, that my prayers—mine, alas!
Oh, that some angel might a trumpet sound:
At which the church, falling upon her face,
Should cry so loud, until the trump were drown'd;
And by that cry of her dear Lord obtain,
That your sweet sap might come again!

THE COLLAR.

I STRUCK the board, and cried, "No more!
I will abroad,
What! shall I ever sigh and pine?
My lines and life are free; free as the road,
Loose as the wind, as large as store.
Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest, but a thorn
To let me blood; and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?
Sure there was wine,
Before my sighs did dry it: there was corn,
Before my tears did drown it.
Is the year only lost to *me?*
Have I no bays to crown it?
No flowers, no garlands gay? all blasted?
All wasted?
Not so, my heart! but there is fruit,
And thou hast hands.
Recover all thy sigh-blown age
On double pleasures: leave thy cold dispute
Of what is fit, and not. Forsake thy cage,
Thy rope of sands,
Which petty thoughts have made, and made to thee
Good cable, to enforce and draw,
And be thy law;
While thou didst wink and wouldst not see.
Away; take heed!
I will abroad,
Call in thy death's-head there: tie up thy fears.
He, that forbears

To suit and serve his need,
Deserves his load."
But as I rav'd, and grew more fierce and wild
At every word,
Methought I heard one calling, "Child!"
And I replied, "My Lord!"

ASSURANCE.

O SPITEFUL bitter thought!
Bitterly spiteful thought! Couldst thou invent
So high a torture? Is such poison bought?
Doubtless, but in the way of punishment,
When wit contrives to meet with thee;
No such rank poison can there be.

Thou saidst but even now,
That all was not so fair as I conceiv'd,
Betwixt my God and me; that I allow
And coin large hopes: but that I was deceiv'd;
Either the league was broke, or near it;
And that I had great cause to fear it.

And what to this? What more
Could poison, if it had a tongue, express?
What is thy aim? Wouldst thou unlock the door
To cold despairs and gnawing pensiveness?
Wouldst thou raise devils? I see, I know,
I writ thy purpose long ago.

But I will to my Father,
Who heard thee say it. "O most gracious Lord,

If all the hope and comfort that I gather,
Were from myself, I had not half a word,
Not half a letter, to oppose
What is objected by my foes.

But thou art my desert;
And in this league, which now my foes invade,
Thou art not only to perform thy part,
But also mine: as, when the league was made,
Thou didst at once thyself endite,
And hold my hand, while I did write.

Wherefore if thou canst fail,
Then can thy truth and I: but while rocks stand,
And rivers stir, thou canst not shrink or quail:
Yea, when both rocks and all things shall disband,
Then shalt thou be my rock and tower,
And make their ruin praise thy power.

Now, foolish thought, go on;
Spin out thy thread, and make thereof a coat
To hide thy shame: for thou hast cast a bone,
Which bounds on thee, and will not down thy throat.—
What for itself love once began,
Now love and truth will end, in man.

THE CALL.

Come, my way, my truth, my life!
Such a way as gives us breath;
Such a truth as ends all strife;
Such a life as killeth death.

Come, my light, my feast, my strength!
Such a light as shows a feast;
Such a feast as mends in length;
Such a strength as makes his guest.

Come, my joy, my love, my heart!
Such a joy as none can move;
Such a love as none can part;
Such a heart as joys in love.

CLASPING OF HANDS.

Lord, thou art mine! and I am thine,
If mine I am: and thine much more,
Than I or ought, or can be mine.
Yet to be thine, doth me restore;
So that again I now am mine,
And with advantage mine the more;
Since this being mine, brings with it thine,
And thou with me dost thee restore.
If I without thee would be mine,
I neither should be mine nor thine.

Lord, I am thine, and thou art mine!
So mine thou art, that something more
I may presume thee mine, than thine.
For thou didst suffer to restore—
Not thee, but me; and to be mine:
And with advantage mine the more,
Since thou in death wast none of thine;
Yet then as mine didst me restore.
O be mine still! Still make me thine;
Or rather make no *thine* and *mine!*

THE PULLEY.

When God at first made man,
Having a glass of blessing standing by,
"Let us," said he, "pour on him all we can:
Let the world's riches, which dispersed lie,
Contract into a span."

So strength first made away:
Then beauty flow'd; then wisdom, honour, pleasure:
When almost all was out, God made a stay,
Perceiving that alone of all his treasure
Rest in the bottom lay.

"For if I should," said he,
"Bestow *this* jewel also on my creature,
He would adore my gifts instead of me;
And rest in nature, not the God of nature:—
So both should losers be.

"Yet let him keep the rest;
But keep them with repining restlessness:
Let him be rich and weary; that at least,
If goodness lead him not, yet weariness
May toss him to my breast."

THE PRIESTHOOD.

Blest order, which in power dost so excel,
That with th' one hand thou liftest to the sky,
And with the other throwest down to hell

In thy just censures; fain would I draw nigh,
Fain put thee on, exchanging my lay-sword
For that of the holy Word.

But thou art fire, sacred and hallow'd fire;
And I but earth and clay: should I presume
To wear thy habit, the severe attire
My slender compositions might consume.
I am both foul and brittle, much unfit
To deal in holy writ.

Yet have I often seen, by cunning hand
And force of fire, what curious things are made
Of wretched earth. Where once I scorn'd to stand,
That earth is fittest by the fire and trade
Of skilful artists, for the boards of those
Who make the bravests shows.

But since those great ones, be they ne'er so great,
Come from the earth, from whence those vessels come,
So that at once both feeder, dish, and meat
Have one beginning, and one final sum;
I do not greatly wonder at the sight,
If earth in earth delight.

But the holy men of God such vessels are,
As serve Him up, who all the world commands:
When God vouchsafeth to become our fare,
Their hands convey Him, who conveys their hands.
Oh, what pure things, most pure, must those things be,
Who bring my God to me!

Wherefore I dare not, I, put forth my hand
To hold the ark, although it seem to shake
Through th' old sins and new doctrines of our land.
Only—since God doth often vessels make
Of lowly matter for high uses meet—
I throw me at his feet.

There will I lie, until my Maker seek
For some mean stuff whereon to show his skill:
Then is my time. The distance of the meek
Doth flatter power. Lest good come short of ill
In praising might, the poor do by submission,
What pride by opposition.

GRIEF.

O who will give me tears? Come all ye springs,
Dwell in my head and eyes: come, clouds and rain!
My grief hath need of all the watery things,
That nature hath produc'd. Let every vein
Suck up a river to supply mine eyes,
My weary weeping eyes too dry for me,
Unless they get new conduits, new supplies,
To bear them out, and with my state agree.
What are two shallow fords, two little spouts
Of a less world? The greater is but small,
A narrow cupboard for my griefs and doubts,
Which want provision in the midst of all.
Verses, ye are too fine a thing, too wise
For my rough sorrows: Cease! be dumb and mute,
Give up your feet and running to mine eyes,
And keep your measures for some lover's lute,

Whose grief allows him music and a rhyme;
For mine excludes both measure, tune and time.
—Alas, my God!

THE FLOWER.

How fresh, O Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns! ev'n as the flow'rs in spring:
To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frost's tributes of pleasure bring.
Grief melts away
Like snow in May,
As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivell'd heart
Could have recover'd greenness? It was gone
Quite under ground, as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have blown;
Where they together
All the hard weather
Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

These are thy wonders, Lord of power!
Killing and quick'ning, bringing down to hell
And up to heaven in an hour;
Making a chiming of a passing-bell.
We say amiss,
'This or that is:'
Thy word is all, if we would spell.

Oh, that I once past changing were;
Fast in thy Paradise, where no flow'r can wither!

Many a spring I shot up fair,
Offering at heav'n, growing and groaning thither:
Nor doth my flower
Want a spring-shower,
My sins and I joining together.

But, while I grow in a straight line,
Still upwards bent, as if heav'n were mine own,
Thy anger comes, and I decline:
What frost to that? What pole is not the zone
Where all things burn,
When thou dost turn,
And the least frown of thine is shown?

And now in age I bud again;
After so many deaths I live and write,
I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing. O my only light,
It cannot be
That I am he,
On whom thy tempests fell all night!

These are thy wonders, Lord of love!
To make us see we are but flow'rs that glide:
Which when we once can find and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us, where to 'bide.
Who would be more,
Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

DOTAGE.

False glosing pleasures,—casks of happiness,—
Foolish night-fires,—women's and children's wishes,—
Chases in arras,—gilded emptiness,—
Shadows well mounted,—dreams in a career,—
Embroider'd lies,—nothing between two dishes:—
These are the pleasures here.

True earnest sorrows,—rooted miseries,—
Anguish in grain,—vexations ripe and blown,—
Sure-footed griefs,—solid calamities,—
Plain demonstrations,—evident and clear,—
Touching their proofs ev'n from the very bone:—
These are the sorrows here.

But oh, the folly of distracted men,
Who griefs in earnest, joys in jest pursue;
Preferring, like brute beasts, a loathsome den
Before a court,—ev'n that above, so clear,—
Where are no sorrows, but delights more true
Than miseries are here!

BITTER-SWEET.

Ah, my dear angry Lord!
Since thou dost love,—yet strike;
Cast down,—yet help afford;
Sure, I will do the like.

I will complain,—yet praise;—
I will bewail,—approve;

And all my sour-sweet days
I will lament,—and love.

AARON.

Holiness on the head;
Light and perfections on the breast,
Harmonious bells below, raising the dead,
To lead them unto life and rest;—
Thus are true Aarons dress'd.

Profaneness in my head;
Defects and darkness in my breast;
A noise of passions ringing me, for dead,
Unto a place where is no rest;—
Poor priest thus am I dress'd.

Only another head
I have, another heart and breast;
Another music, making 'live, not dead;
Without whom I could have no rest:—
In him I am well dress'd.

Christ is my only head;
My alone, only heart and breast;
My only music, striking me e'en dead;
That to the old man I may rest,
And be in him new dress'd

So, holy in my head;
Perfect and light in my dear breast;
My doctrine tun'd by Christ, who is not dead,
But lives in me, while I do rest:—
Come, people; Aaron's dress'd

DISCIPLINE.

THROW away thy rod,
Throw away thy wrath!
O my God,
Take the gentle path!

For my heart's desire
Unto thine is bent:
I aspire
To a full consent.

Not a word or look
I affect to own,
But by book;
And thy book alone.

Though I fail, I weep:
Though I halt in pace,
Yet I creep
To the throne of grace.

Then let wrath remove;
Love will do the deed:
For, with love
Stony hearts will bleed.

Love is swift of foot;
Love's a man of war,
And can shoot,
And can hit from far.

Who can 'scape his bow?
That which wrought on *thee*,

Brought *thee* low,
Needs must work on me:

Throw away thy rod!
Though man frailties hath,
Thou art God!
Throw away thy wrath!

THE BANQUET.

Welcome, sweet and sacred cheer!
Welcome dear!
With me, in me, live and dwell:
For thy neatness passeth sight;
Thy delight
Passeth tongue, to taste, or tell.

O what sweetness from the bowl
Fills my soul,
Such as is, and makes, divine!
Is some star, fled from the sphere,
Melted there,
As we sugar melt in wine?

Or hath sweetness in the bread
Made a head
To subdue the smell of sin;
Flow'rs, and gums, and powders giving
All their living,
Lest the enemy should win?

Doubtless neither star nor flower
Hath the power
Such a sweetness to impart.

Only God who gives perfumes,
Flesh assumes,
And with it perfumes my heart.

But as pomanders and wood
Still are good;
Yet, being bruis'd, are better scented;
God, to show how far his love
Could improve,
Here, as broken, is presented.

When I had forgot my birth,
And on earth,
In delights of each was drown'd;
God took blood, and needs would be
Spilt with me,
And so found me on the ground.

Having rais'd me to look up,
In a cup
Sweetly he doth meet my taste.
But, I still being low and short,
Far from court,
Wine becomes a wing at last.

For, with it alone I fly
To the sky:
Where I wipe mine eyes and see
What I seek for, what I sue:
Him I view,
Who hath done so much for me.

Let the wonder of this pity
Be my ditty,
And take up my lines and life:

Hearken! under pain of death,
Hands and breath,
Strive in this; and love the strife.

THE ELIXIR.

Teach me, my God and King,
In all things thee to see;
And what I do in any thing,
To do it as for thee:

Not rudely, as a beast,
To run into an action;
But still to make thee prepossess'd,
And give it his perfection.

A man that looks on glass,
On it may stay his eye;
Or, if he pleaseth, through it pass,
And then the heav'n espy

All may of thee partake:
Nothing can be so mean,
Which with his tincture, for thy sake,
Will not grow bright and clean.

A servant with this clause
Makes drudgery divine:
Who sweeps a room, as for thy laws,
Makes that, and th' action, fine.

This is the famous stone,
That turneth all to gold:

For that, which God doth touch and own,
Cannot for less be told.

A WREATH.

A WREATHED garland of deserved praise,
Of praise deserved unto thee I give;
I give to thee, who knowest all my ways,
My crooked winding ways wherein I live;
Wherein I die, not live; for life is straight,
Straight as a line, and ever tends to thee—
To thee, who art more far above deceit,
Than deceit seems above simplicity.
Give me simplicity, that I may live;
So live and like, that I may know thy ways;
Know them and practise them: then shall I give
For this poor wreath,—give thee a crown of praise.

DEATH.

DEATH, thou wast once an uncouth hideous thing,
Nothing but bones,
The sad effect of sadder groans:
Thy mouth was open, but thou couldst not sing.

For we consider'd thee, as at some six
Or ten years hence;
After the loss of life and sense,
Flesh being turn'd to dust, and bones to sticks.

We looked on this side of thee, shooting short;
Where we did find
The shells of fledge souls left behind;
Dry dust, which sheds no tears—but may extort.

But since our Saviour's death did put some blood
Into thy face,
Thou art grown fair and full of grace,
Much in request, much sought for as a good.

For we do now behold thee gay and glad,
As at doomsday;
When souls shall wear their new array,
And all thy bones with beauty shall be clad.

Therefore we can go die, as sleep; and trust
Half that we have
Unto an honest, faithful grave;
Making our pillows either down, or dust.

JUDGMENT.

Almighty Judge! how shall poor wretches brook
Thy dreadful look,
Able an heart of iron to appal,
When thou shalt call
For every man's peculiar book?

What others mean to do, I know not well;
Yet I here tell,
That some will turn thee to some leaves therein
So void of sin,
That they in merit shall excel.

But I resolve, when thou shalt call for mine,
That to decline;
And thrust a Testament into thy hand.
Let that be scann'd:
There thou shalt find my faults are thine.

ANONYMOUS.

THE four poems which follow, were put into the Editor's hands, with a view to publication in the present volume, by his highly esteemed friend Mr. James Montgomery. He gladly makes this acknowledgment; both because it is pleasant to acknowledge a favour of this kind from such a quarter, and because he is thus enabled to bring them before his readers with the recommendation of a higher judgment than his own. "It is not known," Mr. M. observes, upon these pieces, "that they have before been printed. They are copied from a manuscript of the early part of the seventeenth century, containing miscellaneous poems on sacred subjects; some of which, notwithstanding occasional harsh and quaint phrases, and the conceits which are characteristic of the age, are "beautiful exceedingly."

ANONYMOUS.

THE INVITATION.

LORD, what unvalued pleasures crown'd
The days of old;
When thou wert so familiar found,
Those days were gold;—

When Abram wish'd thou couldst afford
With him to feast;
When Lot but said, "Turn in, my Lord,"
Thou wert his guest.

But, ah! this heart of mine doth pant,
And beat for thee;
Yet thou art strange, and wilt not grant
Thyself to me.

What, shall thy people be so dear
To thee no more?
Or is not heaven to earth as near
As heretofore?

The famish'd raven's hoarser cry
Finds out thine ear;
My soul is famish'd and I die
Unless thou hear.

O thou great ALPHA! King of kings!
Or bow to me,
Or lend my soul seraphic wings,
To get to thee.

THE FAREWELL.

METHINKS I draw but sickly breath:
Who knows but I
Before next night may sleeping lie,
Rock'd in the arms of death?

The swift-foot minutes pass away;
For Time hath wings,
That flag not for the breath of kings,
Nor brook the least delay.

And what a parcel of my sand
Is yet to pass,
Or what may break the crazy glass,
How shall I understand?

Then, base delights and dunghill joys!
Farewell, adieu!
While yet I live I'm dead to you,
And such-like toys.

I would not longer own a thought
That crawls so low,
Or lavish out my wishes so
In quest of less than nought.

My soul is winged with quick desires
To pass the sky;
Nothing below what is most high
Allays those noble fires.

Lord, as the kindling is from thee,
So thine the breath
That must continue it, till death
Be dead and cease to be.

EMPLOYMENT.

MAN is a busy thing, and he
Will deal in all sorts of affairs,
Weighty and trivial; each may be,
The subject of his greatest cares:
But this shall my employment be,
Still to be busied, Lord, with thee.

Some are all spirit, and will fly
At nothing lower than a throne;
The proudest spires of dignity
They, in their hopes, have made their own;
But this shall my employment be,
To seek my honour all from thee.

Some that are sprung from coarser clay
Adore a paint-disguised face,
And daily their devotion pay
To spotted beasts, or else as base:
But this shall my employment be,
Duly to serve and wait on thee.

Some so enhance the price of gold,
They judge their souls to be but dross;
And are so saving, that they hold
The air, the breath, a mighty loss:
But this shall my employment be,
I will love nothing like to thee.

Some are so loyal to the book
Till they can criticise, and tell
How many steps old Time has took
Since our great father Adam fell:
But this shall my employment be,
Better to know myself and thee.

ADVICE.

Put off the sinner, then put on the saint,
A rotten post doth not become the paint;
Who needs will tread a holy ground, 'tis meet
He leave his shoes behind, and wash his feet.

Seek not thy pleasure in another's shame,
Nor spoil the ointment of thy neighbour's name;
From nakedness the modest turn the head,
Who paddles in the dirt is but ill-bred.

Banish all baser fears, let them not rest
In the more noble mansion of thy breast;
Who is a bondsman unto slavish fears,
His conscience at another's pleasure wears.

Fly such as frolic it in cups of wine,
Why should another's health endanger thine?

The drunkard is a vessel weakly mann'd,
That's wreck'd and cast away upon dry land.

If in the family thou art the best,
Pray oft, and be the mouth unto the rest;
Whom God hath made the heads of families,
He hath made priests to offer sacrifice.

Daily let part of Holy Writ be read,
Let as the body so the soul have bread;
For look, how many souls in thy house be,
With just as many souls God trusteth thee.

The day that God calls his make not thine own
By sports or play, though 'tis a custom grown;
God's day of mercy whoso doth profane,
God's day of judgment doth for him remain.

JOHN MILTON.

BORN 1608; DIED 1674.

IT might justly be deemed needless, or impertinent, to preface the ensuing extracts with any other remark than this—that the motive which governed the choice of them, was to take such pieces only as are worthy of the greatest name in the sacred poetry of England, and, at the same time, of less trite occurrence than some others, in our miscellaneous collections.

MILTON.

THE HYMN.

It was the winter wild,
While the heav'n-born child,
All meanly wrapt, in the rude manger lies:
Nature in awe to him
Had doff'd her gaudy trim,
With her great Master so to sympathize:
It was no season then for her
To wanton with the sun, her lusty paramour.

Only with speeches fair
She woos the gentle air
To hide her guilty front with innocent snow;
And on her naked shame,
Pollute with sinful blame,
The saintly veil of maiden white to throw;
Confounded, that her Maker's eyes
Should look so near upon her foul deformities.

But he, her fears to cease,
Sent down the meek-eyed Peace;

She, crown'd with olive green, came softly sliding
Down through the turning sphere,
His ready harbinger,
With turtle wing the amorous clouds dividing;
And waving wide her myrtle wand,
She strikes a universal peace through sea and land.

No war, or battle's sound,
Was heard the world around:
The idle spear and shield were high up hung;
The hooked chariot stood
Unstain'd with hostile blood;
The trumpet spake not to the armed throng;
And kings sate still with awful eye,
As if they surely knew their sov'reign Lord was by.

But peaceful was the night
Wherein the Prince of light
His reign of peace upon the earth began:
The winds with wonder whist,
Smoothly the waters kiss'd
Whispering new joys to the mild ocean,
Who now hath quite forgot to rave,
While birds of calm sit brooding on the charmed wave.

The stars with deep amaze
Stand fix'd in steadfast gaze,
Bending one way their precious influence;
And will not take their flight,
For all the morning light,
Or Lucifer that often warn'd them thence;
But in their glimmering orbs did glow,
Until their Lord himself bespake, and bid them go.

And, though the shady gloom
Had given day her room,
The sun himself withheld his wonted speed,
And hid his head for shame,
As his inferior flame
The new-enlighten'd world no more should need;
He saw a greater Sun appear
Than his bright throne, or burning axletree, could bear.

The shepherds on the lawn,
Or ere the point of dawn,
Sate simply chatting in a rustic row;
Full little thought they then,
That the mighty Pan
Was kindly come to live with them below;
Perhaps their loves, or else their sheep,
Was all that did their silly thoughts so busy keep.

When such music sweet
Their hearts and ears did greet,
As never by a mortal finger strook;
Divinely warbl'd voice
Answering the stringed noise,
As all their souls in blissful rapture took:
The air, such pleasure loath to lose,
With thousand echos still prolongs each heavenly close.

Nature that heard such sound
Beneath the hollow round
Of Cynthia's seat, the airy region thrilling,
Now was almost won
To think her part was done,
And that her reign had here its last fulfilling;

She knew such harmony alone
Could hold all heaven and earth in happier union.

At last surrounds their sight
A globe of circular light,
That with long beams the shamefac'd night array'd;
The helmed cherubim,
And sworded seraphim,
Are seen in glittering ranks, with wings display'd,
Harping in loud and solemn quire,
With unexpressive notes, to Heaven's new-born Heir.

Such music (as 'tis said)
Before was never made,
But when of old the sons of morning sung,
While the Creator great
His constellations set,
As the well-ballanc'd world on hinges hung;
And cast the dark foundations deep,
And bid the weltering waves their oozy channel keep.

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
Once bless our human ears,
If ye have power to touch our senses so;
And let your silver chime
Move in melodious time;
And let the base of heaven's deep organ blow,
And, with your ninefold harmony,
Make up full consort to the angel-like symphony.

For if such holy song
Enwrap our fancy long,

Time will run back, and fetch the age of gold;
And speckled vanity
Will sicken soon and die,
And leprous sin will melt from earthly mould;
And hell itself will pass away,
And leave her dolorous mansions to the peering day.

Yea Truth and Justice then
Will down return to men,
Orb'd in a rainbow; and, like glories wearing,
Mercy will sit between,
Thron'd in celestial sheen,
With radiant feet the tissued clouds down steering;
And heav'n, as at some festival,
Will open wide the gates of her high palace hall.

But wisest Fate says no,
This must not yet be so,
The Babe lies yet in smiling infancy,
That on the bitter cross
Must redeem our loss;
So both himself and us to glorify:
Yet first to those ychain'd in sleep,
The wakeful trump of doom must thunder through the deep;

With such a horrid clang
As on mount Sinai rang
While the red fire, and smouldring clouds out brake:
The aged earth aghast,
With terror of that blast,
Shall from the surface to the centre shake;

When, at the world's last session,
The dreadful Judge in middle air shall spread his throne.

And then at last our bliss
Full and perfect is,
But now begins; for from this happy day
The old dragon, under ground
In straiter limits bound,
Not half so far casts his usurped sway;
And, wroth to see his kingdom fail,
Swindges the scaly horror of his folded tail.

The oracles are dumb,
No voice or hideous hum
Runs through the arched roof in words deceiving.
Apollo from his shrine
Can no more divine,
With hollow shriek the steep of Delphos leaving.
No nightly trance, or breathed spell,
Inspires the pale-ey'd priest from the prophetic cell.

The lonely mountains o'er,
And the resounding shore,
A voice of weeping heard, and loud lament;
From haunted spring, and dale,
Edg'd with poplar pale,
The parting Genius is with sighing sent;
With flow'r-inwov'n tresses torn
The nymphs in twilight shade of tangled thickets mourn.

In consecrated earth,
And on the holy hearth,
The Lars and Lemures moan with midnight plaint;
In urns and altars round,
A drear and dying sound
Affrights the flamens at their service quaint;
And the chill marble seems to sweat,
While each peculiar power foregoes his wonted seat.

Peor and Baälim
Forsake their temples dim,
With that twice-batter'd god of Palestine;
And mooned Ashtaroth,
Heaven's queen and mother both,
Now sits not girt with tapers' holy shine,
The Libyc Hammon shrinks his horn,
In vain the Tyrian maids their wounded Thamuz mourn.

And sullen Moloch fled,
Hath left in shadows dread
His burning idol all of blackest hue;
In vain, with cymbals' ring,
They call the grisly king,
In dismal dance about the furnace blue:
The brutish gods of Nile as fast,
Isis and Orus, and the dog Anubis, haste.

Nor is Osiris seen
In Memphian grove or green,
Trampling the unshower'd grass with lowings loud:
Nor can he be at rest
Within his sacred chest,

Nought but profoundest hell can be his shroud;
In vain with timbrell'd anthems dark
The sable-stoled sorcerers bear his worshipp'd ark.

He feels from Juda's land
The dreaded Infant's hand,
The rays of Bethlehem blind his dusky eyn;
Nor all the gods beside,
Longer dare abide,
Not Typhon huge, ending in snaky twine:
Our Babe, to show his Godhead true,
Can in his swaddling bands control the damned crew.

So, when the sun in bed,
Curtain'd with cloudy red,
Pillows his chin upon an orient wave,
The flocking shadows pale,
Troop to the infernal jail,
Each fetter'd ghost slips to his several grave;
And the yellow-skirted fayes,
Fly after the night-steeds, leaving their moon-lov'd maze.

But see the Virgin blest
Hath laid her Babe to rest;
Time is our tedious song should here have ending;
Heav'n's youngest teemed star
Hath fix'd her polish'd car,
Her sleeping Lord with handmaid lamp attending:
And all about the courtly stable,
Bright-harness'd angels sit in order serviceable.

THE PASSION.

[A FRAGMENT.]

EREWHILE of music, and ethereal mirth,
Wherewith the stage of air and earth did ring,
And joyous news of heavenly Infant's birth,
My muse with angels did divide to sing;
But headlong joy is ever on the wing,
In wintry solstice like the shorten'd light
Soon swallow'd up in dark and long out-living night.

For now to sorrow must I tune my song,
And set my harp to notes of saddest woe,
Which on our dearest Lord did seize ere long,
Dangers, and snares, and wrongs, and worse than so,
Which he for us did freely undergo:
Most perfect Hero, tried in heaviest plight
Of labours huge and hard, too hard for human wight.

He, sov'reign Priest, stooping his regal head,
That dropp'd with odorous oil down his fair eyes,
Poor fleshly tabernacle entered,
His starry front low-roof'd beneath the skies;
O what a mask was there, what a disguise!
Yet more; the stroke of death he must abide,
Then lies him meekly down fast by his brethren's side.

These latter scenes confine my roving verse,
To this horizon is my Phœbus bound;
His godlike acts, and his temptations fierce,
And former sufferings, other where are found;
Loud o'er the rest Cremona's trump doth sound;

Me softer airs befit, and softer strings
Of lute, or viol still, more apt for mournful things.

Befriend me night, best patroness of grief;
Over the pole thy thickest mantle throw,
And work my flatter'd fancy to belief,
That heav'n and earth are colour'd with my woe;
My sorrows are too dark for day to know:
The leaves should all be black whereon I write,
And letters, where my tears have wash'd, a wannish white.

See, see the chariot, and those rushing wheels,
That whirl'd the prophet up at Chebar flood;
My spirit some transporting cherub feels,
To bear me where the towers of Salem stood,
Once glorious towers, now sunk in guiltless blood;
There doth my soul in holy vision sit,
In pensive trance, and anguish, and ecstatic fit.

Mine eye hath found that sad sepulchral rock
That was the casket of heav'n's richest store,
And here though grief my feeble hands up lock,
Yet on the soften'd quarry would I score
My plaining verse as lively as before;
For sure so well instructed are my tears,
That they would fitly fall in order'd characters.

Or should I thence, hurried on viewless wing,
Take up a weeping on the mountains wild,
The gentle neighbourhood of grove and spring
Would soon unbosom all their echoes mild;
And I (for grief is easily beguil'd)
Might think the infection of my sorrows loud,
Had got a race of mourners on some pregnant cloud.

UPON THE CIRCUMCISION.

Ye flaming powers, and winged warriors bright,
That erst with music, and triumphant song,
First heard by happy watchful shepherds' ear,
So sweetly sung your joy the clouds along
Through the soft silence of the list'ning night,
Now mourn; and if sad share with us to bear
Your fiery essence can distil no tear,
Burn in your sighs, and borrow
Seas wept from our deep sorrow;
He who with all heav'n's heraldry whilere
Enter'd the world, now bleeds to give us ease;
Alas, how soon our sin
Sore doth begin
His infancy to seize!
O more exceeding love, or law more just!
Just law indeed, but more exceeding love!
For we, by rightful doom remediless,
Were lost in death, till he that dwelt above,
High thron'd in secret bliss, for us frail dust
Emptied his glory, ev'n to nakedness;
And that great cov'nant which we still transgress
Entirely satisfied;
And the full wrath beside
Of vengeful justice bore for our excess;
And seals obedience first, with wounding smart,
This day, but, O! ere long,
Huge pangs and strong
Will pierce more near his heart.

SONNET I.

ON HIS BEING ARRIVED TO HIS TWENTY-THIRD YEAR.

How soon hath Time, the subtle thief of youth,
Stol'n on his wing my three and twentieth year!
My hasting days fly on with full career,
But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th.
Perhaps my semblance might deceive the truth,
That I to manhood am arriv'd so near;
And inward ripeness doth much less appear,
That some more timely-happy spirits endu'th.
Yet be it less or more, or soon or slow,
It shall be still in strictest measure even
To that same lot, however mean or high,
Toward which time leads me, and the will of Heaven;
All is, if I have grace to use it so,
As ever in my great Task-master's eye.

SONNET II.

TO A VIRTUOUS YOUNG LADY.

Lady, that in the prime of earliest youth,
Wisely hast shun'd the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen,
That labour up the hill of heav'nly truth,
The better part with Mary and with Ruth
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.
Thy care is fix'd and zealously attends

To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure
Thou, when the bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid hour of night,
Hast gain'd thy entrance, virgin wise and pure.

SONNET III.

ON THE LATE MASSACRE IN PIEMONT.

Avenge, O Lord, thy slaughter'd saints, whose bones
Lie scatter'd on the Alpine mountains cold;
Even them who kept thy truth so pure of old,
When all our fathers worshipp'd stocks and stones,
Forget not: in thy book record their groans
Who were thy sheep, and in their ancient fold
Slain by the bloody Piemontese, that roll'd
Mother with infant down the rocks. Their moan
The vales redoubled to the hills, and they
To heaven. Their martyr'd blood and ashes sow,
O'er all the Italian fields, where still doth sway
The triple tyrant: that from these may grow
A hundred fold, who, having learn'd thy way,
Early may fly the Babylonian woe.

SONNET IV.

ON HIS BLINDNESS.

When I consider how my light is spent,
Ere half my days, in this dark world and wide,
And that one talent which is death to hide,
Lodg'd with me useless, though my soul more bent
To serve therewith my Maker, and present
My true account, lest he returning chide;
"Doth God exact day-labour, light denied?"
I fondly ask. But Patience, to prevent
That murmur, soon replies, "God doth not need
Either man's work or his own gifts; who best
Bear his mild yoke, they serve him best; his state
Is kingly. Thousands at his bidding speed
And post o'er land and ocean without rest;
They also serve who only stand and wait.

RICHARD CRASHAW.

Died 1650.

Crashaw was one of those clergymen, who, during the troubles of this century, were deprived of their benefices, and station in society. Wearied with the sufferings he had endured from political and religious convulsion at home, and exile in a foreign land, he sought a refuge upon the barren rock of papal infallibility. Such of his writings as were composed after this period, contain evident traces of the change; for which an enthusiastic disposition, not unlike that of the ancient anchorites, combined with his misfortunes to prepare him. A singular proof of this is his having passed the greater part of several years in St. Mary's Church, near Peterhouse, Cambridge. "There," says the preface to his works, "he lodged under Tertullian's roof of angels; there he made his nest more gladly than David's swallow, near the house of God; where, like a primitive saint, he offered more prayers in the night than others usually offer in the day. There he penned these poems, viz. 'Steps to the Temple,' the title of one-third part of the small volume containing his works: the other two parts are 'The Delights of the Muses,' and 'Sacred Poems.'"

Crashaw is a genuine and glowing poet: he is equally at home in the playful and the terrible, and throws an equal interest over the familar and the sublime. His well-known poem, "Music's Duel," is scarcely surpassed by any composition in the language for ease, variety, and richness of diction. The writings of Crashaw, however, are all more or less vitiated by that tendency to conceit, which, in his friend Cowley, and others, was carried to so extravagant a length, that it finally debased the whole literary character of the age.

CRASHAW.

THE RECOMMENDATION.

THESE hours, and that which hovers o'er my end,
Into thy hands and heart, Lord, I commend:
Take both to thine account, that I and mine,
In that hour and in these, may be all thine.
That, as I dedicate my devoutest breath
To make a kind of life for my Lord's death,
So from his living and life-giving death
My dying life may draw a new, and never-fleeting breath.

ON THE WATER OF OUR LORD'S BAPTISM.

EACH bless'd drop on each bless'd limb
Is wash'd itself in washing him:
'Tis a gem while it stays here;
When it falls hence, 'tis a tear.

UPON THE SEPULCHRE OF OUR LORD.

HERE, where our Lord once laid his head,
Now the grave lies buried.

THE WIDOW'S MITES.

Two mites, two drops, (yet all her house and land,)
Falls from a steady heart, though trembling hand:
The other's wanton wealth foams high and brave;
The other cast away, she only gave.

'*But now they have both seen and hated*,' &c.—JOHN, xv. 24.

SEEN? and yet hated thee? They did not see,
They saw thee not, that saw and hated thee:
No, no—they saw thee not, O life, O love!
Who saw aught in thee that their hate could move.

'*I am ready not only to be bound but to die*,' &c.—ACTS, xxi. 13.

COME death, come bonds, nor do you shrink, my ears,
At those hard words man's cowardice calls fears.
Save those of fear, no other bonds fear I;
Nor other death than this—the fear to die.

EASTER DAY.

RISE, heir of fresh eternity,
From the virgin tomb:
Rise, mighty Man of Wonders, and thy world with thee;
Thy tomb, the universal east,
Nature's new womb,—
Thy tomb, fair immortality's perfumed nest,

Of all the glories, make noon gay,
This is the morn:
This rock buds forth the fountain of the streams of day:
In joy's white annals live this hour,
When life was born;
No cloud scowl on his radiant lids, no tempest lower.

Life, by this Light's nativity,
All creatures have.
Death only by this day's just doom is forc'd to die;
Nor is death forc'd; for may he lie
Thron'd in thy grave:
Death will on this condition be content to die.

A DIVINE SONG.

Lord, when the sense of thy sweet grace
Sends up my soul to seek thy face,
Thy blessed eyes breed such desire,
I die in love's delicious fire.
O love! I am thy sacrifice;
Be still triumphant! Blessed eyes,
Still shine on me—fair suns! that I
Still may behold, though still I die.

Though still I die, I live again,
Still longing so to be still slain;
So gainful is such loss of breath,
I die even in desire of death.
Still live in me this loving strife
Of living death and dying life;

For while thou sweetly slayest me,
Dead to myself, I live in thee.

THE DEAR BARGAIN.

LORD, what is man? why should he cost thee
So dear? what had his ruin lost thee?
Lord, what is man, that thou hast over-bought
So much a thing of nought?
Alas, sweet Lord, what wer't to thee
If there were no such worms as we?
Heav'n ne'ertheless still heav'n would be.
Should mankind dwell
In the deep hell,
What have his woes to do with thee?
Let him go weep
O'er his own wounds:
Seraphims will not sleep,
Nor spheres let fall their faithful rounds;
Still would the youthful spirits sing,
And still thy spacious palace ring.
Still would those beauteous ministers of light
Burn all as bright,
And bow their flaming heads before thee;
Still thrones and dominations would adore thee;
Still would those ever-wakeful sons of fire
Keep warm thy praise
Both nights and days,
And teach thy lov'd name to their noble lyre.
Let froward dust then do its kind;
And give itself for sport to the proud wind.
Why should a piece of peevish clay plead shares
In the eternity of thy old cares?

Why shouldst thou bow thy awful breast to see
What mine own madnesses have done with me?
Should not the king still keep his throne
Because some desperate fool 's undone?
Or will the world's illustrious eyes
Weep for every worm that dies;
Will the gallant sun
E'er the less glorious run,
Will he hang down his golden head,
Or e'er the sooner seek his western bed,
Because some foolish fly
Grows wanton, and will die?
If I were lost in misery,
What was it to thy heaven and thee?
What was it to thy precious blood,
If my foul heart call'd for a flood?
What, if my faithless soul and I
Would needs fall in
With guilt and sin,
What did the Lamb that he should die?
What did the Lamb that he should need,
When the wolf sins, himself to bleed?
If my base lust,
Bargain'd with death and well-beseeming dust,
Why should the white
Lamb's bosom write
The purple name
Of my sin's shame?
Why should his unstain'd breast make good
My blushes with his own heart-blood?
O my Saviour make me see
How dearly thou hast paid for me;
That lost again my life may prove,
As then in death, so now in love.

HYMN TO THE NAME OF JESUS.

I SING the Name which none can say
But touch'd with an interior ray;
The name of our new peace; our good;
Our bliss, and supernatural blood;
The name of all our lives and loves:
Hearken, and help, ye holy doves!
The high-born brood of day; you bright
Candidates of blissful light,
The heirs elect of love; whose names belong
Unto the everlasting life of song;
All ye wise souls, who in the wealthy breast
Of this unbounded Name build your warm nest.
Awake, my glory! soul, (if such thou be,
And that fair word at all refer to thee,)
Awake and sing
And be all wing!
Bring hither thy whole self; and let me see,
What of thy parent heaven yet speaks in thee.
O thou art poor
Of noble powers, I see,
And full of nothing else but empty me;
Narrow and low, and infinitely less
Than this great morning's mighty business.
One little world or two,
Alas, will never do;
We must have store,
Go, soul, out of thyself, and seek for more,
Go and request
Great nature for the key of her huge chest
Of heav'ns, the self-involving set of spheres,
(Which dull mortality more feels than hears,)

Then rouse the nest
Of nimble art, and traverse round
The airy shop of soul-appeasing sound:
And beat a summons in the same
All-sovereign name,
To warn each several kind
And shape of sweetness—be they such
As sigh with supple wind
Or answer artful touch,—
That they convene and come away
To wait at the love-crowned doors of that illustrious day.
Wake, lute and harp,
And every sweet-lipp'd thing
That talks with tuneful string!
Start into life, and leap with me
Into a hasty fit-tun'd harmony.
Nor must you think it much
To obey my bolder touch:
I have authority, in love's name, to take you
And to the work of love this morning wake you.
Wake! in the name
Of Him who never sleeps, all things that are,—
Or, what's the same,
Are musical;
Answer my call,
And come along;
Help me to meditate mine immortal song.
Come, ye soft ministers of sweet sad mirth!
Bring all your household-stuff of heaven on earth.
Oh you, my soul's most certain wings,
Complaining pipes, and pratling strings,

Bring all the store
Of sweets you have; and murmur that you have no more.
Come, ne'er to part,
Nature and art!
Come; and come strong,
To the conspiracy of our spacious song.
Bring all the powers of praise
Your provinces of well-united worlds can raise;
Bring all your lutes and harps of heaven and earth,
Whate'er co-operates to the common mirth;
Vessels of vocal joys,
Or you, more noble architects of intellectual noise,
Cymbals of heav'n, or human spheres,
Solicitors of souls or ears:
And when you are come, with all
That you can bring or we can call.
Oh may you fix
For ever here, and mix
Yourselves into the long
And everlasting series of a deathless song;—
Mix all your many worlds, above,
And loose them into one, of love.
Cheer thee, my heart!
For thou too hast thy part,
And place, in the great throng
Of this unbounded all-embracing song.
Powers of my soul, be proud!
And speak aloud
To all the dear-bought nations this redeeming name,
And in the wealth of one rich word proclaim
New similies to nature.
May it be no wrong
Blest heav'ns! to you, and your superior song,

That we, dark sons of dust and sorrow,
Awhile dare borrow
The name of your delights and our desires,
And fit it to so far inferior lyres.
Our murmurs have their music too,
Ye mighty orbs! as well as you;
Nor yields the noblest nest
Of warbling seraphim, to the ears of love,
A choicer lesson than the joyful breast
Of a poor panting turtle-dove.
And we, low worms, have leave to do
The same bright business, ye third heav'ns! with you.
Gentle spirits, do not complain;
We will have care
To keep it fair,
And send it back to you again.
Come, lovely name! appear from forth the bright
Regions of peaceful light;
Look from thine own illustrious home,
Fair King of names, and come:
Leave all thy native glories in their gorgeous nest,
And give thyself awhile the gracious guest
Of humble souls, that seek to find
The hidden sweets
Which man's heart meets
When thou art master of the mind.
Come, lovely name! life of our hope!
Lo, we hold our hearts wide ope!
Unlock thy cabinet of day,
Dearest sweet, and come away.
Lo, how the thirsty lands
Gasp for thy golden show'rs, with long stretch'd hands!

Lo, how the labouring earth
That hopes to be
All heaven by thee,
Leaps at thy birth!
The attending world, to wait thy rise,
First turn'd to eyes;
And then, not knowing what to do,
Turn'd them to tears, and spent them too.
Come, royal name! and pay the expense
Of all this precious patience:
Oh, come away
And kill the death of this delay.
Oh see, so many worlds of barren years
Melted and measur'd out in seas of tears!
Oh, see the weary lids of wakeful hope
(Love's eastern windows) all wide ope
With curtains drawn,
To catch the daybreak of thy dawn.
Oh dawn at last, long-look'd for day!
Take thine own wings and come away.
Lo, where aloft it comes! It comes, among
The conduct of adoring spirits, that throng
Like diligent bees, and swarm about it.
Oh, they are wise,
And know what sweets are suck'd from out it.
It is the hive
By which they thrive,
Where all their hoard of honey lies.
Lo, where it comes, upon the snowy dove's
Soft back, and brings a bosom big with loves.
Welcome to our dark world, thou womb of day!
Unfold thy fair conceptions; and display
The birth of our bright joys.

Oh, thou compacted
Body of blessings! spirit of souls extracted!
Oh dissipate thy spicy powers,
Cloud of condensed sweets! and break upon us
In balmy showers!
Oh, fill our senses, and take from us
All force of so profane a fallacy,
To think aught sweet but that which smells of thee.
Fair, flow'ry name! in none but thee,
And thy nectareal fragrancy,
Hourly there meets
An universal synod of all sweets;
By whom it is defined thus—
That no perfume
For ever shall presume
To pass for odoriferous,
But such alone whose sacred pedigree
Can prove itself some kin, sweet name! to thee.
Sweet name, in thy each syllable
A thousand blest Arabias dwell;
A thousand hills of frankincense;
Mountains of myrrh, and beds of spices,
And ten thousand paradises,
The soul, that tastes thee, takes from thence.
How many unknown worlds there are
Of comforts, which thou hast in keeping!
How many thousand mercies there
In pity's soft lap lie a sleeping!
Happy he who has the art
To awake them,
And to take them
Home, and lodge them in his heart.
Oh, that it were as it was wont to be,
When thy old friends, on fire, all full of thee,

Fought against frowns with smiles; gave glorious chase
To persecutions; and against the face
Of death and fiercest dangers, durst with brave
And sober pace march on to meet a grave.
On their bold breasts about the world they bore thee,
And to the teeth of hell stood up to teach thee;
In centre of their inmost souls they wore thee,
Where racks and torments striv'd in vain to reach thee.
Little, alas! thought they
Who tore the fair breasts of thy friends,
Their fury but made way
For thee, and serv'd them in thy glorious ends.
What did their weapons, but with wider pores
Enlarge thy flaming-breasted lovers,
More freely to transpire
That impatient fire
The heart that hides thee hardly covers?
What did their weapons, but set wide the doors
For thee? fair purple doors, of love's devising;
The ruby windows which enrich'd the east
Of thy so oft-repeated rising.
Each wound of theirs was thy new morning,
And re-enthron'd thee in thy rosy nest,
With blush of thine own blood thy day adorning:
It was the wit of love o'erflow'd the bounds
Of wrath, and made the way through all these wounds.
Welcome, dear, all-adored name!
For sure there is no knee
That knows not thee;

Or if there be such sons of shame,
Alas! what will they do,
When stubborn rocks shall bow,
And hills hang down their heav'n-saluting heads
To seek for humble beds
Of dust, where, in the bashful shades of night,
Next to their own low nothing they may lie,
And couch before the dazzling light of thy dread Majesty.
They that by love's mild dictate now
Will not adore thee,
Shall then, with just confusion, bow
And break before thee.

PSALM XXIII.

Happy me! O happy sheep!
Whom my God vouchsafes to keep,
Even my God, even he it is
That points me to these ways of bliss;
On whose pastures cheerful spring,
All the year doth sit and sing,
And, rejoicing, smiles to see
Their green backs wear his livery:
Pleasure sings my soul to rest,
Plenty wears me at her breast;
Whose sweet temper teaches me
Nor wanton, nor in want to be.
At my feet the blubbering mountain
Weeping, melts into a fountain,
Whose soft silver-sweating streams
Make high noon forget his beams.

When my wayward breath is flying,
He calls home my soul from dying,
Strokes and tames my rabid grief,
And does woo me into life.
When my simple weakness strays,
Tangled in forbidden ways,
He, my Shepherd, is my guide;
He 's before me, on my side,
And behind me; he beguiles
Craft in all her knotty wiles:
He expounds the giddy wonder
Of my weary steps, and under
Spreads a path clear as the day,
Where no churlish rub says nay
To my joy-conducted feet;
Whilst they gladly go to meet
Grace and peace, to meet new lays
Tun'd to my great Shepherd's praise.
Come now, all ye terrors, sally,
Muster forth into the valley,
Where triumphant darkness hovers
With a sable wing, that covers
Brooding horror. Come, thou death,
Let the damps of thy dull breath
Overshadow even the shade,
And make darkness' self afraid;
There my feet, even there, shall find
Way for a resolved mind.
Still, my Shepherd—still, my God,
Thou art with me; still thy rod
And thy staff, whose influence
Gives direction, gives defence.
At the whisper of thy word
Crown'd abundance spreads my board:

While I feast, my foes do feed
Their rank malice, not their need;
So that with the selfsame bread
They are starv'd, and I am fed.
How my head in ointment swims!
How my cup o'erlooks her brims!
So, even so, still may I move
By the line of thy dear love:
Still may thy sweet mercy spread
A shadly arm above my head,
About my paths; so shall I find
The fair centre of my mind
Thy temple, and those lovely walls
Bright ever with a beam that falls
Fresh from the pure glance of thine eye,
Lightning to eternity.
There I'll dwell for ever; there
Will I find a purer air
To feed my life with; there I'll sup
Balm and nectar in my cup;
And thence my ripe soul will I breathe
Warm into the arms of Death.

DEATH'S LECTURE.

THE FUNERAL OF A YOUNG GENTLEMAN.

Dear relics of a dislodg'd soul, whose lack
Makes many a mourning paper put on black!
O stay awhile ere thou draw in thy head,
And wind thyself up close in thy cold bed.
Stay but a little while, until I call
A summons worthy of thy funeral.

Come then, youth, beauty, and blood;
All the soft pow'rs
Whose silken flatteries swell a few fond hours
Into a false eternity. Come, man,
Hyperbolized nothing! know thy span;
Take thine own measure here; down, down, and bow
Before thyself in thine idea, thou
Huge emptiness! contract thyself, and shrink
All thy wild circle to a point! O sink
Lower and lower yet; till thy lean size
Call Heav'n to look on thee with narrow eyes.
Lesser and lesser yet; till thou begin
To show a face, fit to confess thy kin,
Thy neighbourhood to nothing.
Proud looks, and lofty eyelids, here put on
Yourselves in your unfeign'd reflexion.
Here, gallant ladies! this unpartial glass,
Though you be painted, shows you your true face:
These death-seal'd lips are they, dare give the lie
To the loud boast of poor mortality:
These curtain'd windows, this retired eye,
Out-stares the lids of large-look'd tyranny:
This posture is the brave one, this that lies
Thus low, stands up, methinks, thus, and defies
The world. All-daring dust and ashes! only you,
Of all interpreters, read nature true.

THE HYMN.,

"DIES IRÆ, DIES ILLA," &c.

IN MEDITATION OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT.

HEARS'T thou, my soul, what serious things
Both the psalm and sybil sings
Of a sure Judge, from whose sharp ray
The world in flames shall fly away?

O that fire! before whose face
Heav'n and earth shall find no place:
O these eyes! whose angry light
Must be the day of that dread night.

O that trump! whose blast shall run
An even round with the circling sun,
And urge the murmuring graves to bring
Pale mankind forth to meet his King.

Horror of nature, hell and death!
When a deep groan from beneath
Shall cry, "We come! we come!" and all
The caves of night answer one call.

O that book! whose leaves so bright
Will set the world in severe light:
O that Judge! whose hand, whose eye
None can endure—yet none can fly.

Ah then, poor soul, what wilt thou say?
And to what patron choose to pray?
When stars themselves shall stagger, and
The most firm foot no more then stand.

But thou giv'st leave, dread Lord, that we
Take shelter from thyself, in thee;
And, with the wings of thine own dove,
Fly to the sceptre of soft love.

Dear Lord! remember in that day
Who was the cause thou cam'st this way:
Thy sheep was stray'd; and thou wouldst be
Even lost thyself in seeking me.

Shall all that labour, all that cost
Of love, and ev'n that loss, be lost?
And this lov'd soul, judg'd worth no less
Than all that way and weariness?

Just Mercy, then, thy reckoning be
With my price, and not with me:
'Twas paid at first with too much pain,
To be paid twice, or once in vain.

Mercy, my Judge, mercy I cry
With blushing cheek and bleeding eye:
The conscious colours of my sin
Are red without and pale within.

O let thine own soft bowels pay
Thyself; and so discharge that day.
If sin can sigh, love can forgive:—
O say the word, my soul shall live.

Those mercies which thy Mary found,
Or who thy cross confess'd and crown'd,
Hope tells my heart, the same loves be
Still alive and still for me.

Though both my pray'rs and tears combine,
Both worthless are; for they are mine:
But thou thy bounteous self still be;
And show thou art, by saving me.

O when thy last frown shall proclaim
The flocks of goats to folds of flame,
And all thy lost sheep found shall be,
Let 'Come, ye blessed,' then call me,

When the dread "*Ite*" shall divide
Those limbs of death from thy left side,
Let those life-speaking lips command
That I inherit thy right hand.

Oh, hear a suppliant heart, all crush'd
And crumbled into contrite dust!
My hope, my fear! my Judge, my Friend!
Take charge of me, and of my end.

TEMPERANCE, OR THE CHEAP PHYSICIAN.

UPON THE TRANSLATION OF LESSIUS.

Go, now, and with some daring drug
Bait thy disease; and, whilst they tug,
Thou, to maintain their precious strife,
Spend the dear treasures of thy life.
Go, take physic, dote upon
Some big-nam'd composition,
The oraculous doctors' mystic bills—
Certain hard words made into pills,
And what at last shalt gain by these?—
Only a costlier disease.

That which makes us have no need
Of physic, that 's physic indeed.
Hark hither, reader! wilt thou see
Nature her own physician be?
Wilt see a man, all his own wealth,
His own music, his own health;
A man whose sober soul can tell
How to wear her garments well;
Her garments, that upon her sit,
As garments should do, close and fit;
A well-cloth'd soul that 's not oppress'd
Nor chok'd with what she should be dress'd;—
A soul sheath'd in a crystal shrine,
Through which all her bright features shine;
As when a piece of wanton lawn,
A thin aërial veil, is drawn
O'er beauty's face, seeming to hide,
More sweetly shows the blushing bride;—
A soul, whose intellectual beams
No mists do mask, no lazy steams;—
A happy soul, that all the way
To heaven rides in a summer's day?
Wouldst see a man, whose well-warm'd blood
Bathes him in a genuine flood?
A man whose tuned humours be
A seat of rarest harmony?
Wouldst see blithe looks, fresh cheeks beguile
Age? wouldst see December smile?
Wouldst see nests of new roses grow
In a bed of reverend snow?—
Warm thoughts, free spirits flattering
Winter's self into a spring?
In sum, wouldst see a man that can
Live to be old—and still a man?

Whose latest and most leaden hours
Fall with soft wings, stuck with soft flowers;
And when life's sweet fable ends,
Soul and body part like friends;
No quarrels, murmurs, no delay;
A kiss, a sigh, and so away?
This rare one, reader, wouldst thou see?—
Hark hither! and thyself be he.

THE END.

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